

# SERMONS

ON THE

## Following SUBJECTS,

V I Z

Of the Great Duty of Universal  
Love and Charity.

Of the Government of Passion.

Discourses upon Occasion of the  
PLAGUE.

Of St. PETER being the Rock  
on which CHRIST built his  
Church.

Of the Faith of ABRAHAM.

Of CHRIST being the Bread of  
Life.

Of the Original of Sin and Mi-  
sery.

Of Election and Reprobation, be-  
ing a Paraphrase on *Rom. ix.*

The PRESENT Life a State of  
PROBATION in order to a fu-  
ture Life.

That CHRIST's Admonitions to  
his Apostles, belong universal-  
ly to all Christians.

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By *SAMUEL CLARKE*, D. D.

Late Rector of St. *James's, Westminster.*

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V O L. VIII.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for A. MILLAR; J. and R. TONSON; J. HODGES;  
W. BOWYER; R. BALDWIN; and S. CROWDER and  
H. WOODGATE. M.DCC.LVI.



# SERMONS

ON THE

## Following Subjects,

VIZ

|                                                                          |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Of the Great Day of Universal<br>Judgment and Rewards.                   | Of the Government of Patience.                                     |
| Of Election and Reprobation, be-<br>ing a Paraphrase on Rom. ix.         | Discourses upon Occasion of the<br>Plague.                         |
| The Present Life a State of<br>Probation in order to a fu-<br>ture Life. | Of St Peter being the Rock<br>on which Christ built his<br>Church. |
| Christ's Admonitions to<br>his Disciples, being universal.               | Of the Faith of Abraham<br>being the Faith of all Christians.      |



By SAMUEL CLARKE, D.D.

late Rector of St James's Westminster.

VOL. VII.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MILLAR, J. and R. TONSON, J. HODGKINS,  
W. BOWLER, R. BARBURY, and S. CROWE and  
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And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, how shall ye have his which is your own?

SERMON

SERMON

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*The Great Duty of Universal LOVE  
and CHARITY.*

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A  
**S E R M O N**

Preached before the  
**Q U E E N,**

A T  
**St. JAMES's CHAPEL,**

On Sunday December the 30th, 1705.

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Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTY'S Special Command.

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I JOHN IV. 21.  
*And this Commandment have we from him,  
that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*

**T**HE true End and Design of Religion **S E R M.**  
is, manifestly this; to make Men **I.**  
wiser and better; to improve, exalt,  
and perfect their Nature; to teach  
them to obey and love and imitate God; to  
cause them to extend their Love and Goodness  
Vol. VIII. B and



## *The Great DUTY of*

S E R M. and Charity to all their Fellow-Creatures, each

I. in their several Stations, and according to the Measure of their several Abilities; in like Manner as the universal Goodness of God, extends itself over all his Works through the whole Creation: And to oblige them to govern the Passions of their Mind, with Moderation; and the Appetites of their Body, with Temperance. This is plainly the chief End and Design of true Religion. And whoever acts contrary to all or any of these great Rules, by wilfully dishonouring God, by hating his Brother, or by abusing and corrupting himself; is either a false and hypocritical Professor of the Truth, if he does these Things in Contradiction to the plain Rules, and in Defiance of the Laws of his Religion; or else the Religion which he professes, is itself a false and corrupt Religion, if he does any of these Things in Compliance with the Principles, and by Permission of the Laws thereof. The Religion of the Church of Rome, is therefore a false and corrupt Religion; because, as it dishonours God by mixing Idolatry with Divine Worship, and gives Men too much Encouragement to corrupt *Themselves* and to indulge their vicious Inclinations and Habits, by allowing them, through many Superstitious Rites, to reconcile a wicked Life with the Hopes of Heaven; so it *particularly* permits, nay, and requires Men to hate and persecute their *Brethren*. And those whom, for want of the Arguments of Reason

1

son and Truth, they are not able to convince SERM.  
 and bring over to their Party, they endeavour L  
 by all the Ways of Violence and Cruelty to root  
 out and extirpate from among Men: As if the  
 Religion of Christ was intended to divest Men of  
 common Humanity, and the Service and Glory of  
 God could in good earnest be promoted by the De-  
 struction of Mankind. This is one of the great-  
 est Corruptions of an excellent Institution, that  
 can be imagined; when Religion itself, instead  
 of promoting the universal Peace and Happiness  
 and Welfare of Men, is made to authorize such  
 Practises, the Prevention whereof is manifestly  
 the chief and greatest End for which any Religion  
 can reasonably be supposed to have been institu-  
 ted at all. Particular Persons, under the Profes-  
 sion of the best and purest Religion in the World,  
 may be led away with some Degrees of this Spi-  
 rit of Error; through a false Zeal, and a mis-  
 taken Judgment; as some of the *Apostles* them-  
 selves were for calling for Fire from Heaven up-  
 on the *Samaritans* who refused to entertain our  
 Saviour: But the Christian Religion *itself*, the  
 pure and uncorrupted Doctrine of our Saviour,  
 is entirely opposite to this Spirit; and teaches  
 us nothing but Love and Peace, Meekness and  
 Charity, Patience and Forbearance one towards  
 another. If a Man say, I love God, and hateth  
 his Brother, he is a Liar; For this Commandment  
 have we from him, that he who loveth God love his  
 Brother also.

SERM. In the following Discourse upon which Words;  
 I. I shall endeavour, *First*, to shew briefly the great Obligation, which lies upon all Men in general, considered as Equals, to practise this excellent Duty of Love and Meekness, Patience and Forbearance one towards another. And, *Secondly*, I shall consider some of the principal and most remarkable Variations of this Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances that Men stand in, one towards another.

I. As to the Obligation which lies upon all Men in general, consider'd as Equals, to practise this great Duty of universal Love, Meekness, and Charity; 'tis evident

1<sup>st</sup>. That, by the Original Order and Constitution of *Nature*, Men are so made and framed, that they necessarily want one another's Help and Assistance, for their mutual Support and Preservation in the World. They cannot subsist, at least they cannot enjoy any Comfort of Life, independently of each other; but are manifestly fitted by the very Frame of their Nature, to live in Communities; and Society is absolutely necessary for them; and the Bond of all Society, is mutual Love, Charity and Friendship. Now in this Respect, all Men naturally stand upon the same Level; they have all the same natural Wants and Desires; they are all in the same Need of each other's Assistance, and are equally capable of enjoying the Benefits and Advantages of Society. 'Tis manifest therefore that



## Universal LOVE and CHARITY.

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that every Man, as he is a Man, is bound by S E R M.  
the Law of his Nature, by common *Humanity*, I.  
to look upon himself as a Part or Member of   
that one universal Body or Community, which  
is made up of all Mankind; to think himself  
born and sent into the World on purpose, to  
promote the publick Good and Welfare of all  
his Fellow-Creatures; and consequently obliged,  
as the necessary and only effectual Means to that  
End, to embrace them all with universal Love,  
Charity, and Benevolence.

And as all Men are obliged to this, by the necessary *Law and Condition* of their Being, and by all the outward *Circumstances* of the present State, wherein God has placed them; so they are also strongly prompted to it by the *natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, when not corrupted by the Practise of Vice. For by Nature Men are plainly disposed to be kind and friendly, and willing to do good. Nothing is naturally more agreeable and pleasant to the Mind of Man, than being helpful and beneficial one to another. And, did they not suffer Covetousness and Revenge, and other foolish and absurd Passions, unreasonably to over-rule this their natural Disposition; they would universally enjoy the happy Fruits and Effects of it. For even in the present most corrupt State of the World, as far as their Vices will permit, Men still desire to keep up a general Commerce and Communication with each other; they love to encrease their



SER.M. Dependencies, by multiplying Affinities; and  
 I. to enlarge their Friendships, by mutual good  
 Offices; and to establish Societies, by a Com-  
 munication of Arts and Labour and Industry.  
 The only possible Means of preserving which  
 Societies in any tolerable and durable Manner,  
 being the Practise of mutual Love and universal  
 Charity and Benevolence, shows plainly what  
 the Direction and Tendency of uncorrupted Na-  
 ture is.

No Man therefore can, without transgressing  
 both the plain *Law* of his Being, and also acting  
 contrary to the Reason of his own Mind and the  
 natural *Inclination* of his uncorrupted Affections,  
 do willingly any Hurt or Mischief to any Man:  
 But every one is obliged for the publick Benefit,  
 to endeavour to do good to all, and to love all  
 Men even as himself. And upon what Occasion  
 soever any Misunderstandings or Provocations  
 may happen to arise, he ought immediately to  
 endeavour to appease with Gentleness, rather  
 than exasperate with Retaliations, and put an  
 End to all Differences, as soon as possibly he can.  
 By this Means the World would become as hap-  
 py, as 'tis possible for Men in this present State  
 of Imperfection to be. And nothing hinders  
 Mankind from arriving actually at this Degree  
 of Happiness, but most *perverse* and most *unrea-  
 sonable Iniquity*.

For, in order to bring about this great and  
 excellent End, viz. universal Love and Friend-  
 ship,

ship, and all the happy Effects and Consequences of it; nothing further is requisite, than that Men do to others in all Respects, what they would reasonably desire that others should in like Circumstances do to them. This is all that is really meant by loving others as themselves; and thus much they are manifestly obliged to, by the plainest *Equity*, and by the clearest *Reason* in the World. Every Man is desirous, and thinks it highly reasonable, that others should deal with *Him*, according to the Rules of *Equity*, *Humanity* and *Friendship*; that they should be tender of his *Life*, *Estate* and *Reputation*; that in *Matters of Commerce*, they should treat him with *Justice*, *Fairness* and *Truth*; that in *Things wherein he stands in need of their Assistance*, and has good Ground to expect it, they should be willing to relieve him according to their *Power*; that in case of *Ignorance* or *Mistake*, they would be ready to inform him; and, where he has given any *Offence*, to forgive him upon his *Desire of Reconciliation*. This every Man thinks reasonable in his *own Case*; and therefore he is undeniably bound to think it reasonable likewise, when ever it be *another Man's Case* to expect the like from *Him*. And if he does not act according to this Judgment; he is manifestly guilty of such *Iniquity* and *Unrighteousness*, as nothing but *Custom* in *Wickedness* and the *Number of evil Examples* could be able to support Men under, and harden them in the

SER M. Practise of it, against the Shame and Self-condemnation of their own Minds. For, what is in itself fit and right to be done, every Man's own Conscience plainly tells him; and whensoever he gives himself Time seriously to consider and review his Actions, it accordingly either applauds and commends him, and affords him great Pleasure and Satisfaction, from the Sense of his having answered the chief Ends of his Creation, and complied with the highest Obligations of his Nature, in having endeavoured to promote the universal Welfare and Happiness of Mankind, by the Practise of Truth and Righteousness, Meekness, Goodness and Charity; or else, on the other Side, it cannot but secretly reproach and severely condemn him, for having acted the contrary Part. Which Judgment of Conscience, though Men may indeed conceal from the World, and dissemble their Sense of the Weight of it upon their own Minds, in respect of their *own Actions*; yet it always discovers itself in the Censures they pass upon the *Actions of others*. For, how much Wickedness, and Uncharitableness, or Pride and Contentiousness soever, Men can overlook in *themselves*; yet there is no Man, but in judging of *others*, where his own Interest and Passions are not concerned, will rightly enough distinguish concerning the Characters of Persons, and the true Value of Men's Actions; will give just Applause and Commendation to Men of meek and peaceable and quiet



## Universal LOVE and CHARITY.

9

quiet Spirits, Lovers of Mankind, such as delight SERM.  
to do good, and to make all about them as easy I.  
and happy as they can; and, on the contrary,  
will freely condemn the Promoters of Hatred,  
Animosity, and Contention. All which plainly  
shows, both what the Law of our Nature, and  
what the original Inclinations of our Affections  
are, when not corrupted with the Practice of  
Vice.

2. As all Men are obliged thus by the necessary *Circumstances and Condition* of their Being, and also by the *original and natural Inclinations* of their own Minds, to love and to do good to each other, according to their several Powers and Abilities: So they are still further and more strictly obliged to the Practice of the same Duty, in *Imitation of the Nature*, and in *Obedience to the Will and Law of God*. *God himself is Love*, Joh. iv. 8.  
as the Apostle styles him; an infinite and inexhaustible Fountain of never-failing Goodness: Who, being infinitely and eternally happy in the Injoyment of his own unspeakable Perfections, could have no other Motive to create Things at first, but only that he might communicate his Goodness and Happiness to his Creatures; and continues to preserve them for no other Reason, but that he may still continue to do good to them.

*He maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Un-<sup>45</sup>*  
*just: Giving us from Heaven fruitful Seasons, and <sup>Acts xiv.</sup>*  
*filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness. Now <sup>17</sup>*

for



**S E R M.** for the same Reason that God does *himself* continually delight in doing Good, and seems always to take especial Pleasure in describing himself by that particular Attribute of Love and Goodness; for the same Reason it must necessarily be his Will, that all reasonable Creatures should imitate him in that excellent Perfection; and by the Practise of mutual Love and Charity, permit and assist each other to enjoy in particular the several Effects and Blessings of the Divine universal Goodness. God cannot but be pleased with such, who endeavour to conform themselves to the Likeness of his Divine Nature, and make it their Business, according to the Extent of their Power, and the Measure of their several Abilities, to promote the Welfare and Happiness of all their Fellow-Creatures; in like Manner as the Love and Goodness and Mercy of God extends itself universally over all his Works through the whole Creation. He has given us noble Powers and Faculties on Purpose, to enable us to imitate him in the Exercise of these excellent Attributes. He has endued us with Reason and Understanding for that very End, that we might be able to discern between Good and Evil, and learn to choose the one and avoid the other. He has implanted in our Minds such Affections and Dispositions, as naturally incline us to be *kind* and *friendly* and *charitable* one towards another. He has so framed and constituted our Nature, and so ordered the Circumstances of our present State,

as

as to make Society and Friendship necessary to *See* the Support and Comfort of Life; on Purpose that Men might be continually exercised in the Practise of these Divine Virtues. He has interwoven the Interests of Men, and made the Happiness of every particular Person depend upon the Welfare of the Publick; that each one, from the Sense of his own Wants and Exigencies, might see the Reasonableness and Necessity of making it his principal Business to do good to others. In fine; he has given us no other Way of expressing so acceptably our Love and Gratitude to himself, whom we have not seen; as by loving and doing good to our Brethren, whom we have seen. For no Man hath seen God at any Time; but if we love one another, hereby we know that God, tho' invisible, yet really dwelleth in us, and that his Love is perfected in us, and that we dwell in him, and he in us, because we are Imitators of his Nature and Partakers of his Spirit. And thus much is clear even from the bare Light of Nature itself.

4. vi. 19.

iv. 19.

Joh. iv. 12: & 13.

But then, 3dly, The Christian Religion carries our Obligation to the Practise of this excellent Duty, still much higher. We are Now obliged to love and to do good to one another, not only by the Ties of common Humanity, as we are Men, and Partakers of the same common Nature; but we are further to look upon ourselves as Brethren in a more peculiar and eminent Manner, being all the Children of God in Christ, all Members

**S**ERMON. **I** members of the same Body, all Partakers of the same Spirit, all Heirs of the same blessed Hope of Immortality. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in you all.*

Eph. iv. 4.

Eph. vi. 1. *Wherefore I beseech you, saith the Apostle, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

Again: We Christians, have not only the *Example* of God's Love and Goodness in general proposed to our Imitation, as these excellent Attributes of the Divine Nature are made known to us by right Reason, and the Light of Nature, and by our continual Experience of that good Providence which presides over all, and does good to all, and manifests itself daily in all the Works of God through the whole Creation; But we have moreover the *Example* of God's Goodness and Loving-kindness manifested to us in a more particular and extraordinary Manner, in that singular Instance of the Redemption of Mankind by the Death of his Son: Of which exceeding great and undeserved Mercy, we being all Partakers, and having all our Hopes of Happiness founded upon it, are consequently under the strongest Obligation possible, to be in our Proportion kind and merciful and charitable

to

to



to our Brethren, as God has been infinitely good SERM.  
and merciful to Us. This Argument is so strongly I.  
urged by the Apostle St. Paul, Col. iii. 12.   
*Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and be-  
loved, Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of  
Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; forbearing one a-  
nother, and forgiving one another, if any Man has  
a Quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you,  
so also do ye. And above all these Things, put on  
Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection; and let  
the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to the which  
also ye are called in one Body.*

Lastly; as we are Christians, we are obliged to  
love and to do good to each other; not only by our  
knowing in general, from the Consideration of the  
Divine Nature and Attributes, that it must needs  
be agreeable to the Will of God that we should  
do so; but by having moreover received it, with  
singular Inforcement, as the peculiar Law and  
Command of our Saviour, on which he insists  
particularly, and seems to recommend it above  
all others, as the most absolutely necessary and  
indispensable Qualification of a sincere Christian.  
*A new Commandment, saith he, I give unto ye, that  
ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye  
also love one another; Joh. xiii. 34. And he  
makes it as it were the distinguishing Mark and  
Badge of his Disciples: By this shall all Men  
know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love  
one towards another. He himself, whilst he was  
here upon Earth, went continually about, doing  
good;*

SERMON good; and in so doing he has set us an Example,  
 I. wherein he indispenſably requires that we should  
 follow his Steps. And accordingly we find the  
 Apostles every where declaring, that universal  
 Love and Charity, is the End of the Commandment,  
 the principal Aim and Design of our whole Re-  
 ligion, 1 Tim. i. 5. That he that loveth his Neigh-  
 bour, hath fulfilled the Law; For that all the  
 Commandments are briefly comprehended in this Say-  
 ing, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself, Rom.  
 xiii. 8. And again; that all the Law is fulfilled in  
 one Word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy Neigh-  
 bour as thyself, Gal. v. 14. Inſomuch that who-  
 soever wants this excellent Virtue, all his other  
 Pretences of Religion whatsoever, and of Zeal for  
 the Service of God, are declared to be in vain  
 and of no Value. If a Man say, I love God; and  
 hateth his Brother, he is a Liar, 1 Joh. iv. 20.  
 And St. Paul in like manner: Though I speak,  
 saith he, with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and  
 have not Charity; I am become as sounding Brassy,  
 or a tinkling Cymbal; That is, all my Pretences  
 to Religion are false and empty. And though I  
 have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mys-  
 teries and all Knowledge; and though I have all  
 Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have  
 no Charity; I am nothing. And though I bestow  
 all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give  
 my Body to be burned; and have not Charity; it  
 profiteth me nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. 1. And the  
 Reason why so particular a Stress is laid upon  
 the

the Practise of this great Duty of universal Love and Charity, is plain. Namely, because it is that Temper and Disposition of Mind, which is the highest possible Improvement and Perfection of our rational Nature. 'Tis that which makes our Souls like unto God, who is Goodness itself. 'Tis that which, in the Nature of the Thing itself, is of the last and utmost Importance; as being naturally and necessarily the Condition and Ground both of our present Happiness and of that which is to come. 'Tis a Qualification of Mind absolutely necessary, to make us capable of the Sight of God, and of the Happiness of Heaven. For we must be like God, if we will see him as he is. And we must first attain that Disposition of Mind, wherein the Happiness of Heaven essentially consists; if we will hope to be Partakers of that Happiness. In a Word; that Frame of Mind which inclines us to do good, and to take Delight in doing it, is itself the Temper and Disposition of Happiness; and without this, 'tis no more possible for a rational Creature to be made Happy, than it is to alter the Nature and Essences, the necessary and eternal Reasons and Proportion of Things. This is the plain and necessary Reason, why Love and Charity and Goodness, are constantly preferred before all other Virtues; as being the ultimate End and Design of Religion; and themselves, a principal and necessary Ingredient of the Joys of Heaven. Almost all other Virtues, or Gifts and Excellen-



SERMON. *cies whatsoever, are but as Means to this End, and to be done away when that which is perfect is come. Hope, is but the present Expectation, and Faith the firm Belief of those Things which shall be made manifest hereafter. And when that comes to pass, then these Virtues, and other Gifts which are in Order to these, must necessarily and of Course cease. Whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away. But Charity and Goodness never fail. These are Dispositions of Mind which are begun in the Virtues of this Life, and completed in the Glory of the next; which will grow up with the Improvements of our Knowledge and Virtue here, to a perfect and unspeakable Happiness in the Enjoyments of the World to come.*

1 Cor. xiii.  
8.

And now, could any Man, who seriously considered these Things, and was unacquainted with the Practise of the World, believe it possible, that Men, who professed that holy Religion which so plainly teaches this Doctrine of Peace, should yet so directly contrary to the whole End and Design of the Religion of Christ, (as is too plainly the Practise of the chief Propagators of the *Romish* Faith) indulge their Passions, their Pride, their Covetousness, their Ambition so far, as not only to be the Cause of Envyings, Strifes and Contentions, but even to make *Wars and Fightings* necessary among Christians?

Jam. iv. 1.

tians? to the infinite Scandal of our most holy SERM.  
 Religion, in the Sight of *Jews and Turks and* I.  
*Pagans; among whom the Name of God is blas-*  
*phemed through Us, as it is written; Rom. ii. 24.*  
 Could such a one believe it possible, if it was  
 not too manifest in Experience; that Men who  
 call themselves Christians, should oppress and  
*bite and devour one another*, and not be afraid of  
 the Apostles threatning, that they should *be con-* Gal. v. 15.  
*sumed one of another?* And is it not still much  
 more absurd, that Religion *itself*, that the Reli-  
 gion of Christ, the Religion of Peace and Love,  
 which was intended to reconcile Men to God,  
 and to each other, should itself be made the Oc-  
 casion of Hatred, Animosities and Contentions;  
 nay, of the greatest Oppressions and most inhu-  
 man Cruelties? In a Word, that Pretenses of  
 Religion *itself*, should produce in Men that Spi-  
 rit, for the preventing whereof all Religion was  
 principally and ultimately intended? I shall con-  
 clude this Head with those remarkable Words  
 of the Apostle St. James, Jam. iii. 13. *Who is a*  
*wise Man, and endued with Knowledge amongst you?*  
*Let him shew out of a good Conversation his Works*  
*with Meekness of Wisdom. But if ye have bitter*  
*Envyings and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and*  
*lie not against the Truth. This Wisdom descendeth*  
*not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish;*  
*for where Envyng and Strife is, there is Confusion*  
*and every evil Work. But the Wisdom that is from*  
*above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy*  
 VOL. VIII. C to

SERM. to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits,

I.

&c.

II. It remains that I proceed in the 2d Place to consider briefly some of the principal *Variations* of this great Duty, arising from the different Relations and Circumstances which Men stand in one towards another.

And here the Practise of this Duty is *diversified* as many Ways, as there are different Stations, or different Circumstances and Conditions of Men in the World. I shall only mention these following; from which all the rest may easily be deduced.

1st, What this great Duty of Love and Charity obliges us to, in respect of our Behaviour towards *Superiours and Inferiours*.

2dly. How it obliges us to behave ourselves towards our *Enemies*, or those who have done us any particular Injury. And

3dly. How it obliges good Men to behave themselves towards those, who are either *neglecters or despisers of Religion* in general, or so unhappy as to be involved in some particular *great and pernicious Errors*.

1st. In respect of our Behaviour towards *Superiours*; the Duty of *universal Love* is to shew forth itself in hearty willing and cheerful Obedience to the Commands of those whom God has set over us: In delighting to promote their Honour, and to increase amongst Men that Duty and



and Respect, which is due to Authority: In SERM.  
 thinking them that *rule well worthy of double Ho-* I.  
*nour*: And (because all Government is a Burden,

as well as an Honour; therefore) this Duty particularly obliges us to endeavour to make that Burden as light and easy as we can, by a careful and diligent and conscientious Discharge of our several Duties, each in our respective Stations; so as unanimously to promote all the Ends and Designs of good Government, the Execution of wise and wholesome Laws, and the Peace and Prosperity of the Publick.

In respect of our Behaviour towards *Inferiours*; the Duty of Christian *Love*, is to shew forth itself in just and righteous and merciful Dealings; in readily relieving the Necessities of those that want; in delivering and vindicating the Oppressed; in instructing the Ignorant and those that are in Error; in reproofing the Wicked, and, by good Example as well as good Advice, persuading and bringing them to a better Mind: In a Word, doing all the Good we can, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men; in imitating of our Saviour, *who went about doing good.*

Now by how much the greater any Man's Power or Riches, Interest or Authority is, and by how much the higher his Station is in the World; by so much the greater is his Power of doing good, and by so much the more glorious is his exercising and imploying his Power to that excellent and noble End. And here is the

SERM. true and immortal Glory of wise and good  
 I. Princes, that as they represent God in the Exercise of Power and Authority in the World, so they resemble him also in the Application of that Power to serve the Ends of Virtue and Goodness in promoting the publick Happiness of Mankind. Power is not desirable for its own Sake, any more than Wisdom and Knowledge; but only for the Sake of that greater good, which it enables Men to do in the World. And to abuse Power to the enslaving and destroying of Mankind, and to the serving such Purposes, the preventing whereof is indeed the only good Reason for which Power is truly desirable; is the greatest Weakness and Absurdity in the World. To employ great Power and Riches in conquering and subduing many Nations, in causelessly oppressing Multitudes of People, and subverting the common Rights and Liberties of Men; is the greatest Folly, as well as the greatest Wickedness, imaginable: And nothing can be more weak and contrary to Reason, than to call that Ambition by the Name of Glory and Greatness, which is really the most inglorious the most dishonourable Thing in Nature. God is the supreme Governor of the World, possessed entirely of absolute and uncontrollable Power: Yet he makes Use of that Power to no other End, but to preserve and support and do good to all his Creatures, according to their several Natures and Capacities. *He is good, and does good;*

good; and esteems Goodness his greatest Glory SERM.  
 and Perfection, the Title which he most de- I.  
 lights to be described by. True Greatness there-   
 fore, is to imitate God in this most glorious  
 Perfection of Goodness. And those whom he  
 has endued with Power and Authority to repre-  
 sent him on Earth, are then most truly and il-  
 lustriously his Vice-gerents, when they look up-  
 on a large Extent of Power, to be only a greater  
 Compass of doing good; when they imitate  
 God, in being Lovers and Preservers of Man-  
 kind, and making Government a Protection and  
 Security to all that live under it. And if be-  
 yond this, they be still further enabled to re-  
 strain the Fury of Oppressors abroad, and to be  
 Vindicators of the common Rights and Liber-  
 ties of Nations; this is still a higher Degree of  
 true Honour and Greatness, and a becoming  
 really the Praise and Glory of the whole Earth.  
 How unspeakably happy is that People, on  
 whom God has vouchsafed to bestow so inestim-  
 able a Blessing! And how thankful ought we  
 to be, that the Description of such Felicity, is  
 at this Time the exact Description of our own  
 Case!

2dly. In Respect of our Behaviour towards our  
*Enemies*, or those who have done us any parti-  
 cular Injury; the Duty of universal Love and  
 Charity, is to shew forth itself in a willing and  
 ready Disposition to forgive them upon their  
 Repentance and desire of Reconciliation. *If thy*



SERM. *Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if*  
 I. *he repent, forgive him: And if he trespass against*  
 thee seven Times in a Day, and seven Times in a  
 Day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt  
 forgive him, Luke xviii. 3. This, we Christi-  
 ans are in a particular Manner obliged to, by  
 the Example of God's much greater Goodness  
 and Compassion towards Us. Since God has  
 forgiven us all, our *ten thousand Talents*; nothing  
 can be more reasonable in the Nature of the  
 Thing itself, than that we should be moved by  
 that Example, to forgive one another *freely our*  
*hundred Pence*; and to have Compassion each on  
 our *Fellow-Servants*, as God has had Pity on Us.  
 But besides the Reasonableness of the Thing it-  
 self, God has moreover made it the express  
 Condition of our own enjoying the Benefit of  
 His gracious Pardon: For, *so likewise*, saith our  
 Saviour, *shall my heavenly Father do also unto you,*  
*if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Bro-*  
*ther their Trespases*, Mat. xviii. 35. And ac-  
 cordingly we are directed even in our daily  
 Prayer, to ask Forgiveness at the Hands of God;  
 only upon such Condition, and in such Manner,  
 as we forgive one another our Trespases. And  
 this is, upon Supposition of our Enemies re-  
 penting: But if they do *not* repent, yet even  
 still we are obliged to *love and bless them*, to pray  
 for them, and take all Opportunities of *doing*  
*good* to them; after the Example of our heavenly  
 Father, who doth good even to the Evil and the  
 Unthankful

Unthankful. Nevertheless, all that is said up-  
 on this Head, is to be understood of *private*,  
 not of *the public* Enemies; against whom nei-  
 ther the Laws of Nature nor of Christianity,  
 have provided any other Way of securing our-  
 selves, than by endeavouring to deprive them of  
 the Power of hurting Us.

SERM.  
I.

*Lastly.* In respect of the Behaviour of good  
 Men towards those who are either Neglecters and  
 Despisers of Religion in general, or so unhappy  
 as to be involved in some particular great and  
 pernicious Errors; the Duty of universal Love  
 and Charity, obliges us to endeavour by all the  
 Ways of Gentleness, Instruction and Reproof,  
 to bring them to Repentance and a better Mind.  
 Magistrates indeed, and those who are placed in  
 Authority, may and ought to make use of Pu-  
 nishment and Severity, towards those who are  
 guilty of such Crimes, as are destructive of hu-  
 man Society, and the strict Execution of Good  
 Laws, is in that Case an Instance of the greatest  
 Love and Charity to the Publick. But other-  
 wise, 'tis the Duty of *a Servant of the Lord*, not *2 Tim. ii.*  
*to strive, but to be gentle unto all Men, apt to* *24.*  
*teach, patient; in Meekness instructing those that*  
*oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give* *Jam. i. 20.*  
*them Repentance to the Acknowledgement of the*  
*Truth.* For, *the Wrath of Man worketh not the*  
*Righteousness of God:* And our Saviour himself  
 severely condemns That Spirit, which some of  
 his Disciples discovered, when they desired to

SERM. call for Fire from Heaven, upon the *Samaritans*  
 I. who refused to give him Reception. Such Persons as are not yet come to have a right Sense of Religion in general, 'tis our Duty to persuade by Reason and Arguments; to convince them of the Being, Attributes and Providence of God; of the Necessity and infinite Importance of Religion; of the unalterable Difference of Good and Evil; of the Reasonableness, Excellency, and positive Evidence of the Christian Revelation. And those who are so unhappy as to be involved in any *particular* pernicious Errors, 'tis our Duty to inform, instruct, reprove, and by all Christian Means endeavour to bring them back to the Acknowledgment of the Truth: Taking Care above all Things, to show them by our good Examples, and by the Influence of the Truth upon our own Lives; that we have no other Design in endeavouring to convince them, but theirs and our own Salvation. In promoting which Ends, we shall do well to have always imprinted on our Minds those excellent Words, wherewith St. James concludes his Epistle: *Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the Sinner from the Error of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins.*

A SER-



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the FUNERAL of

MARY Lady COOKE,

Late WIFE of

Sir JOHN COOKE, of Doctor's-  
Commons, London, Knight, Doc-  
tor of LAWS, &c.

On Tuesday, October 11, 1709.

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2 COR. V. 8.

*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be  
absent from the Body, and to be present with the  
Lord.*

THE Apostle in the foregoing Chapter de- S E R M.  
clares at large how the Assurance of a Re- II.  
surrection from the Dead, not only enabled him  
to perform cheerfully all the Duties of a Chri-  
stian Life, but supported him also, so as not to  
faint under the severest Persecutions, which con-  
tinually threatned him even with Death it self.  
*Therefore as we have received Mercy, saith he, we  
faint*

SERM. faint not, ver. 1. *We are troubled on every side, yet*

II. *not distress'd; we are perplex'd, but not in despair;*

*persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, ver. 8, 9. The Ground of which Comfort and Support, he expresses, ver. 10. Always bearing about in the Body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh; for we which live, are always delivered unto Death for Jesus sake, that the Life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal Flesh. And more clearly, v. 13, 14. Having the same Spirit of Faith — —, and knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. After which he returns to the Inference he began with in the first Verse; v. 16. For which Cause we faint not, but tho' our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day; for our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen, are Temporal; but the Things which are not seen, are Eternal.*

From this general Consideration of the Certainty of a future Life, as a Ground of Support and Comfort under the Troubles of the present; he proceeds in the beginning of the fifth Chapter, to consider the particular Nature of that Body we shall be cloathed withal at the Resurrection; and of that intermediate State, the Soul

will

will find it self in, between Death and Judgment. SERM. II.  
 As to the Nature of our future *Body*, he tells us, v. 1. that whereas our present *Body* is an *earthly House*, a Building fram'd out of the most perishable Materials, and of a Texture most frail and brittle; a *Tabernacle* tending perpetually in its own Nature by a gradual Decay towards a *Dissolution*, and during that short Period which it is capable of continuing, being every Moment liable to be destroyed by sudden Violence, by the Power of Men, and by the Assaults of acute Diseases: The *Body* we shall have hereafter, shall on the contrary be a *Building of God*, an *House not made with Hands*, eternal in the *Heavens*; a *Body*, fram'd immediately by God himself, made capable of induring for ever, and fitted to the Circumstances and Enjoyments of that Place, which God has provided for it in the *Heavens*.

The frequent Meditation upon which happy State, causes good Men to groan earnestly, v. 2. *desiring to be cloathed upon with our House which is from Heaven*; if so be that being cloathed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this *Tabernacle* do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that *Mortality* might be swallow'd up of *Life*. This Passage some understand to refer to what the same Apostle informs us of, in the 15th Chapter of his foregoing Epistle, concerning those who shall be found alive at our Lord's second Coming; that they



*A Sermon Preach'd at the*

SERM. they shall not *die*, but be *changed*; not be *un-*  
II. *cloath'd* of this mortal Body, but *cloath'd* upon  
with their heavenly Habitation; and that the A-  
postle here expresses a Desire of escaping Death,  
and of being found among those, who, without  
becoming *naked*, without being *separated* from  
the Body at all, shall in a *Moment*, in the *twink-*  
*ling of an Eye*, be *changed*, or *cloathed* upon with  
an immortal and incorruptable Body. But there  
is no need of interpreting the Words to this  
Sense. For when the Apostle affirms that we  
are desirous, not to be *uncloathed*, but to be  
*cloathed upon*; not to be found *naked*, but to be  
*cloathed upon with our House which is in Heaven*;  
he does indeed prefer our *State after the Resurrec-*  
*tion*, to the *State of Separation*; and represents  
good Men wishing to be deliver'd from the Bur-  
den of the Flesh, not merely for the Sake of be-  
ing separate from the Body, but chiefly and prin-  
cipally in Hopes of being cloathed with a better  
and more glorious one. But yet it does not  
therefore follow, that he meant to extend this  
Desire so far as to the escaping of Death wholly,  
and the avoiding to enter into the separate State  
at all; or that he thought this peculiar Circum-  
stance of those who shall be found alive at the  
Lord's second Coming, could possibly be the  
Case of those who lived so early as in his own  
Time. Nay rather the contrary seems clearly to  
follow from the 6th Verse, and from the Words  
of the Text; where he speaks of *being absent*  
from

from the Body, as of a Thing that would certainly happen to them, and which was truly desirable to good Men; and the Expectation whereof was a Ground of Confidence and Support under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death: Because though the State after the Resurrection, when we shall be cloathed with incorruptable and immortal Bodies like unto our Saviour's glorious Body, shall be much more happy and desirable, than the State of Separation; yet that State of Separation itself, that imperfect and incomplete State, is far superior to our Condition in this World, and more eligible than the Burden of the present Flesh. Therefore we are always confident, says he, knowing that whilst we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by Faith, not by Sight;) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.

The Words are not well rendered, *whilst we are at Home in the Body*. For this Body is not our proper Home; we are only Strangers and Pilgrims in the present World; and our Life is by St Peter justly call'd, *The Time of our sojourning here*. But, whilst we dwell in the Body, (so the Words ought rather to be rendered,) or (as the same Word is translated in the following Verse,) *whilst we are present in the Body*; whilst we continue in this World; we are absent from the Fountain of Life and Happiness: We are at a Distance from the heavenly Jerusalem, which is our

SUM. our proper Country; *we are absent from the Lord;*

II. *and live by Faith only, not by Sight.* But, God having given unto us the earnest of his holy Spirit, *we are confident,* and have full Assurance of the Truth of these Things: We wean ourselves therefore from the sensual Injoyments of the present World; we support and comfort ourselves with these Meditations, under the Troubles of Life, and against the Fears of Death; *we are willing rather to be absent from the Body,* (whensoever it shall please God to release us; ) *and to be present with the Lord,* which is far better.

In the Words, and in the Context, we may observe the following particulars plainly implied.

1<sup>st</sup>, That we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body.

2<sup>dly</sup>, That this State of Separation, is not a State of absolute Insensibility.

3<sup>dly</sup>, That, to good Men, it is a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord.*

4<sup>thly</sup>, That the Consideration of that intermediate Happiness, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death. *We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body.*

5<sup>thly</sup> and Lastly, That this intermediate State, tho' it may be a State of Happiness, yet is by no Means equal to that Happiness which good Men shall be possess'd of after the Resurrection. *For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that Mortality, might be swallowed up of Life.*

1<sup>st</sup>, 'Tis



1st, 'Tis supposed in the Words, that we must all shortly be *absent* or separate from this Body. 'Tis evident there is no need to *prove*, and one would think there should be no need to *remind* Men, that they must all die; when they have every Day such mournful Occasions as these, to excite their Consideration. Yet so it is, that even *this very Thing*, the *Frequency* of other Examples and the indisputable *Certainty* of their own Mortality, makes them stand in need of the more earnest Exhortations, to persuade them not to forget or neglect it. For as the strongest Objects that make perpetually an equal and continued Impression upon constant Presence, do affect us little more, than if they made no Impression upon the Sense at all; and as those great *Phenomena* of Nature, which we observe to return in the constant Course of every Day, excite in us less Admiration, tho' in themselves the most wonderful of all the Works of God, than Things much less remarkable, which appear but seldom: So the absolute Certainty of our own Mortality, which leaves no room for Inquiry or Debate, makes Men almost as much lay aside the Thoughts of it, as if the Certainty were on the other Side of the Question; and the frequency of Instances which ought perpetually to remind us what we must speedily expect, does by a strange Carelessness and habitual Neglect, reconcile Men in such Manner to the Sight of Mortality in others, as if they themselves were

SERM.

II.

SERMON. not concern'd in the Example. They shake off  
 II. the Thought of it, as if there could be no Benefit in meditating upon what cannot be prevented; and they look upon it as importune and troublesome to remind them of that, which 'tis not possible but they must already know, yet that Knowledge, without Meditation, is like unto Ignorance; because it has no Effect, and makes no Impression. 'Tis like the speculative Knowledge of a Truth, which concerns us not; or like the habitual Understanding of a Demonstration, never recollected. The Reason of this great Stupidity, seems to be the Uncertainty of the Time of every Man's Death; which makes Men look upon Life, as a long indefinite Period; and, because the Time of their Death is *uncertain*, 'tis to them as an *Uncertainty* in the *Thing itself*. To prevent this Folly therefore, the Scripture is perpetually reminding us, and putting us upon considering, that *our Days on Earth are as a Shadow, and there is no abiding*, 1 Chron. xxix. 15. That *they are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*, Job. vii. 6. That *they are swifter than a Post*; that *they flee away as the swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey*, Job ix. 26. That they are *as a Sleep, as a Watch in the Night, as a Tale that is told*, Psal. xc. 5, 4, 9. That *our Life is a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away*, James iv. 14. That *Man cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not*, Job xiv. 2. In  
 the

the Morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the SERM.  
Evening it is cut down and withereth, Psal. xc. 6. II.

All which Similitudes are elegantly summed up together by the Author of the Book of Wisdom:

Wisd. v. 9. All these Things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that basted by, and as a Ship that passeth over the Waves of the Water, which when it is gone by, the Trace thereof cannot be found, neither the Path way of the Keel in the Waves; or as when a Bird has flown thro' the Air, there is no Token of her Way to be found; or like as when an Arrow is shot at a Mark, it parteth the Air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a Man cannot know where it went thro'; even so we in like Manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our End, and have no Sign of Virtue to shew. These Descriptions of the Vanity and Transitoriness of human Life, are too evidently true, to stand in need of any Proof. Yet the Riches and Honours, the Pleasures and Allurements of the World, hinder Men too usually from considering them; and Men act as if they were to live here for ever. Providence therefore is very kind to us, in sending Afflictions upon us to awaken us out of this Lethargy; and we should be very Wise and Just to ourselves, if we would suffer ourselves to be brought to serious Consideration by the Troubles and Afflictions of others. When we see others taken out of the World before us, we know their Case must in a short Time of Necessity be our own;



SERMON and the Concern we always see dying Persons under, should make us endeavour without Delay

III. in the time of our Health and Strength, to lay the Foundation of a good Conscience against the Day of Tryal. We are sure Eternity can never be very far distant from any of us; and we are always uncertain, but it may possibly be very near. And when Death approaches, Sickness and Pain are alone a Burden sufficient; and it will require all the Helps of Reason and Religion, all the Strength of the *Spirit of a Man*, to sustain at that Time the *Infirmities* of Nature. But if the *Spirit* itself be wounded; if the Conscience be distracted with too just Fears; if the great Work of Religion be then *undone*, and yet impossible to be *done*; if the *Spirit* of the Man, which should support him under his Infirmary, does itself much more stand in need of *Comfort and Support*; *who can bear it?* This is the Time when all false Colours vanish, and the great Difference and Distinction of Men begins truly to appear. Now the Profane, the Covetous, the Voluptuous, the Mockers and Scoffers at Religion, begins to judge by other Measures; and if God should require some great Thing of him, would he not do it? On the contrary, the Sober and Pious, the Righteous and just Person, reflects then with unspeakable Comfort upon his past Life; when he remembers that he has either liv'd always innocent from great Crimes; or at least that the Sins of his Youth have not been so great, as

the Repentance and Obedience of his wiser Age. SERM.

And when the Vail is removed by Death, which II.

transmits these different Persons to that State, where they are to wait for the final Sentence of the unerring Judgment of God; they themselves will judge still more and more clearly concerning the true Nature of Things, and of their own Deserts. For Death is not a total Extinction of the Man, but a Separation only of the Soul from the Body for a Time. Which was the next Particular I proposed to discourse of.

And here, for Brevity sake, I shall put the

Second and Third Particulars into one, viz.

That the State of Separation, is not a State of absolute Insensibility, but to good Men a State of great Happiness, a being *present with the Lord*.

All the *Natural* Arguments, (for the *Moral* Arguments indeed prove only a future State in general, by the Resurrection of the Body, or otherwise;) all the *Natural* Arguments, I say, which

prove to us by Reason the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul, seem to prove no less strongly, that the separate State is not a State of Sleep or Insensibility. For if it is a good Argument to conclude with *Cicero*; when I consider,

says he, *with what Swiftness of Thought the Soul*

*Quid multa? Sic mihi persuasi, sic sentio; quum tanta celeritate animorum sit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorum providentia, tot artes, tantæ scientiæ, tot inventa; non posse eam naturam, quæ res eas contineat, esse mortalem. Cic. de senectute.*

SERM. is endued, with what a wonderful Memory of Things  
 II. past, and Forecast of Things to come; how many  
 Arts, how many Sciences, how many wonderful In-  
 ventions it has found out; I am persuaded that That  
 Nature, which is Possessor of such Faculties, cannot  
 be Mortal: If this, I say, be a good Argument,  
 (and a very excellent one it is;) it seems no less  
 just to infer with Cyrus in Xenophon: I cannot  
 imagine, saith † he, that the Soul while it is in this  
 mortal Body, lives; and that, when it is separated  
 from it, then it should die: I cannot persuade myself,  
 that the Soul, by being separated from this Body,  
 which is devoid of Sense, should thereupon become  
 itself likewise devoid of Sense: On the contrary it  
 seems to me more reasonable to believe, that when the  
 Mind is separated from the Body, then it should be-  
 come most of all sensible and intelligent. But these  
 were only the reasonable Conjectures of wise and  
 considering Men. The Scripture assures us with  
 more Certainty and Authority, that blessed are the  
 Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea,  
 saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their La-  
 bours, and their Works do follow them, Rev. xiv.  
 13. Which Rest, that it is not the mere Rest  
 of utter Insensibility, may be gathered from ch.  
 vi. v. 9. where 'tis said, I saw under the Altar the

† Οὐλοῦ ἤγαθῇ, ἢ καὶ, ἡδὲ τῇ ἡρώδει ἐκείνῳ, αἰ ἡ ψυχῇ,  
 ἡν ἔν τῳ θανάτῳ ἐπέμεινεν ἡ; ὅταν, ὅταν ἀναστήσῃ, τότε  
 ὁὐδὲ γὰρ ὅταν ἀφ᾽ οὗ ἐκείνῃ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνῃ ἔσται ἐπέμεινεν ἡ  
 γυνὴ, ἡδὲ τῇ ἡ πείρωσιν. Ἀλλ' ὅταν ἀναστήσῃ, ἡ ἀναστήσῃ  
 ἀναστήσῃ, τότε ἡ φρονεῖσάτων αὐτῶν αὐτῶν ἐστίν. Cyprus apud Xen.

Souls



*Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, SERM. and for the Testimony which they held; and they cried II. with a loud Voice, &c.*

The same Thing is intimated to us by our Saviour, in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*; where the Soul of *Lazarus* is represented as carry'd by Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*, and that he was comforted in that Place, *Luke xvi. 22, 25.* And more clearly yet, in his Promise to the Penitent Thief, *Luke xxiii. 43. Verily I say unto thee, to Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* To Day, that is, immediately, in the State of Separation, before the Resurrection of *Christ*, and his Ascension into his Kingdom. *St. Paul* had such a Notion of the Happiness of that State, that tho' his abiding in the *Flesh* he knew was better for the Church, yet he was in a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to depart and to be with *Christ*, which was far better for himself, *Phil. i. 23, 24.* And in the Text he declares; *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by Faith, not by Sight: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* The present Life he calls, *walking only by Faith*: the State after Death, *walking by Sight, or being present with the Lord.* And accordingly all the best Writers in the Primitive Times, when they have Occasion to mention the State of good Men departed, always speak of them

SERM. them as being \* in the Place appointed for them  
 II. with the Lord; as † beholding our Saviour in Paradise, after such a Manner as they are worthy to behold him; as being in a Place of Rest, Refreshment, Comfort, and Expectation of the Completion of their Happiness at the Resurrection. Directly contrary to the Innovations of the Church of Rome, who, without any appearance of Reason, and without any Colour of Authority from Scripture, teach that the Souls of good Men are tormented in a Purgatory of imaginary Fire, very little differing from that of Hell itself. How much better does even a Jewish Writer express himself upon this Subject! *Wis. iii. 1. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them. In the Sight of the Unwise they seemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Misery; and their going from us, to be utter Destruction; but they are in Peace. For tho' they be punish'd in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.*

4thly, The Consideration of the Soul's intermediate Happiness in the separate State, is a great Comfort and Support against the Fear of Death: Therefore we are confident, says the Apostle, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. 'Tis some Degree of Comfort against the Fear of Death, to consider that

\* Εἰς τὸ ἐφελόμενον αὐτοῖς τόπον ἡμεῖς ὡς εἰς τὸ κοῖνον. Poly-  
 carpi Epist.

† Πανταχῶς ὁ ὁ Σωτὴρ ὁραθήσεται, καθὼς ἔχουσιν οἱ ἅγιοι.  
 Irenæus, lib. 5.

it is the Necessity of Nature, and the Appointment of God to all Men; *Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto Men once to die.* 'Tis some further Degree of Support, to consider that Death is as it were the Haven of Rest, from the Storms and Troubles, the Calamities and Sorrows of the World: *Job iii. 17. There the Wicked cease from troubling, and there the Weary be at Rest; there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor: The Small and Great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master.* But after all the Arguments of Comfort that can be drawn from Reason and Philosophy, Death is still the King of Terrors to Nature, and is become much more so thro' Sin. But Christ has now, to all such as repent and truly amend, taken away that Sting, and removed the Fear; having destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and delivered them, who thro' fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage. *Heb. ii. 15. Death is now abolished, to all good Men, 2 Tim. i. 10. and become nothing else but a Passage to a glorious Immortality.* And 'tis a great Addition of Comfort and Support, to consider that even that Passage itself is not a dark Passage thro' a State of utter *Insensibility*; but a being present with the Lord in some Degree of Communication, and Fore-taste of a more perfect Happiness.

The pious Lady, whose Death we now lament, took particular Satisfaction in meditating frequently upon this Subject; and in enquiring



SERM. into the full Extent and Signification of those  
 II. Texts, which relate to it. She made the holy  
 Scriptures her daily Study and Delight, and was  
 much conversant in many other excellent Books  
 of Piety and Devotion: and the Comfort such  
 Studies administer against the Fear of Death, is  
 then truly effectual, when 'tis applied by such  
 Persons, as are prepared to receive it by the pre-  
 ceding Course of a holy Life. For the Space of  
 two Years wherein Providence allotted me to  
 perform the Duties of my Ministry in the Parish  
 wherein she dwelt, (and wherein I received sin-  
 gular Favours, particularly from the eminent  
 Society for the Profession and Practice of the Ci-  
 vil-Law, which ought always to be gratefully  
 acknowledged;) I was myself a Witness of her  
 constant and never-failing Attendance upon the  
 publick Service of God, and the Administration  
 of the Sacrament, with the most exemplary Zeal  
 and Devotion: And, in all the Opportunities I  
 had of observing it, her private Conversation ap-  
 pear'd perfectly agreeable to her religious Beha-  
 viour in publick. Which, in a Person in the  
 Strength and Vigour of her Age, very little ex-  
 ceeding thirty Years at the Time of her Death, is  
*an Example* that may be recommended with Jus-  
 tice and Usefulness. But to enlarge too far upon  
 the Characters even of such truly pious Persons,  
 is neither giving any real Advantage to the Me-  
 mory of the Dead, nor of so much Benefit to the  
 Living, as the exhorting them upon these Occa-  
 sions

flions to prepare themselves for Death, which they S E R M.  
 are all hastning to, by setting before their Eyes II.  
 continually the most perfect Example of Christ,   
 and the Precepts of the Gospel; in following  
 of which, all good and holy Men and Women  
 who have gone before us, have obtain'd a good  
 Report.

*sibly and Lastly.* The intermediate State of  
 Separation, though it may be a State of great  
 Happiness, yet is by no Means equal to that  
 Happiness, which good Men shall be possess'd  
 of after the Resurrection: *For we that are in this  
 Tabernacle, do groan, being burden'd; not for that  
 we would be uncloath'd, but cloath'd upon, that  
 Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life.* St. Paul,  
 tho' he knew, that when he was *absent from the  
 Body*, he should be *present with the Lord*, in a  
 State of Rest and Security and perfect Assurance,  
 in a State of great Happiness and Joy unspeaka-  
 ble; yet tells us, that the *Crown of Righteousness*  
 was *laid up* for him, not to be *given* him by the  
*Righteous Judge* before *that great Day*. And our  
 Saviour himself bids the charitable Person expect  
 his final *Recompence*, at the *Resurrection of the  
 Just*. And in the Place before-cited, the Souls  
 of the *Martyrs* themselves, which St. *John* saw  
 in his Vision under the Altar, are represented as  
 in a State of Expectation only; *How long, O  
 Lord, Holy and True, &c.* Rev. ix. 7. And it was  
*said unio them, that they should rest yet for a little  
 Season, until their Fellow-Servants also, and their  
 Brethren*

SER M. Brethren that should be killed as they were, should be

II.

*fulfilled.* In a Word, the Souls of the Righteous are doubtless as happy, as they can be in that imperfect State of Separation from their Bodies: But 'tis after the Resurrection only, that their Happiness shall be complete, and that they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father: When our Lord shall have changed this vile Body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious Body; according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto himself: That is, when this Body, which has now in it such manifest Principles of Mortality and Corruption; which consists now of such brittle and tender Parts, that every the least Violence disturbs and unfits them for their Operations; when this Body, which is now so weak and feeble, so dull, heavy and unactive, that it clogs the Soul, and retards and hinders its spiritual Operations; when this Body, which is now subject to so many Casualties, and has its Continuance depending upon the fit Disposition of so many little and easily disorder'd Parts, that 'tis a greater wonder how we continue to live a Day, than why we die after so few Years Space; shall be perfectly refin'd and purged from all the Seeds of Mortality and Corruption; shall spring up into an incorruptable and immortal Substance, which shall be fitted to endure as long as the Soul to which it is to be united, even to all Eternity; shall become so Strong and Powerful, so Active and Vigorous,



as even to be assisting to the most spiritual Mo- S E R M.  
tions of the Soul, to become every Way a fit II.  
Organ and Instrument of its most exalted Ope-  
rations, and shall continue in this perfect Health,  
Strength and Vigour for ever. For God shall  
wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall  
be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither  
shall there be any more Pain, for the former Things  
are passed away.

To which happy State, that we may all arrive, God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

A S E R-

# SERMON

Preach'd before the *Honourable House of Commons*, at the Church of *St. Margaret, Westminster*: On *Tuesday, Nov. 22, 1709*. Being the Day of Thanksgiving for the *Signal Victory* obtained near *Mons*, and for the other great *Successes of Her Majesty's Arms*, this last Year, under the *Command of the Duke of Marlborough*.

PSAL. L. 23.

*Whoſo offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I ſhew the Salvation of God.*

SERM.  
III.

THERE is no Nation under Heaven, ſince the Times of God's governing the *Jews* by an immediate Theocracy, that has ſeen more and clearer Inſtances of the Interpoſition of Providence on their Behalf, or has had greater Bleſſings and Means of publick Proſperity put into their Hands; than we of this Nation have had.

As

As the Hills stand about Jerusalem, said the Psalmist, (Psal. cxxv. 2.) even so standeth the Lord round about his People: As the Seas encompass our Land, may we no less justly say, even so does the Protection of Providence surround us on all Sides. We have enjoyed a long and uninterrupted Succession of the Blessings of Heaven from above, and of the Earth beneath; of fruitful Seasons, and a large and plentiful Increase. We have lived under a secure Establishment of all our private Rights and just Liberties, in a wise and well-constituted Government, and in the regular Execution of good and wholesome Laws. We have had the free Exercise of our Religion continued almost to us alone, when so many of those about us have been deprived of that inestimable Liberty. We have had Deliverances little less than miraculous, frequently vouchsafed us; and have seen many visible Interpositions of Providence, in causing such Concurrences of Circumstances for our Advantage, as no humane Wisdom could either foresee, direct, or overrule.

When, after a long Establishment of our Peace and Prosperity, we, like *Jeshurun*, waxed fat and kicked; when our Prosperity made us wanton, and we forgot God who poured these Benefits upon us; when Corruption of Manners prevailed over the Purity of our Religion, and we grew cool in our Zeal for the Service of God, and for the Honour of his Laws; then did

Deut. xxxii. 15.



SEEM did it please God to ~~threaten~~ us with the Rod of arbitrary Power, and with the Fears of Popish Slavery; to awaken us out of our careless Neglect of Religion, and to compose our little Differences and unchristian Animosities among ourselves. Yet did he ~~threaten~~ us only with these Judgments, and ~~show~~ us the Terror of them as it were at a Distance; but did not suffer them to prevail over us; removing them from us by an unparallelled Deliverance, almost as soon as they approached, and that we began to feel the Smart of them. And from the Time of that wonderful Deliverance, even unto this Day, has God continued to bless us with Success Abroad under victorious Armies, and with Peace and Plenty at Home, under pious and religious Princes. A great and always perpetual Series of Successes has attended our Arms, through the various Events and Hazards of a long, tedious, bloody, and expensive War; against the deep Counsels, and formidable Strength, of a cunning, potent, and formerly long-successful Enemy. And at the same Time, we ourselves sit every Man under his Vine, and under his Fig-tree, in the secure and peaceable Enjoyment of whatever each one has a Right to possess. We enjoy almost all the Happiness and Blessings of Peace, even in the midst of a vigorous and bloody War; while the Sword and Fire consume round about us, and other fruitful Countries are ravaged and destroyed; while Thousands fall beside us, and ten Thou-

sands

*sands at our Right-hand*, and yet Providence protects us, that it *comes not nigh us*; while Want and Famine spreads Desolation among our Neighbours, and Pestilence at a Distance threatens still severer Judgments of God. We are not liable to be perpetually spoiled, by the Violence of arbitrary Power; and to be daily bereaved of our nearest and most valuable Rights, at the meer Will and Pleasure of a lawless Oppressor; But under the happy Influences of a mild and most auspicious Government, and under the Protection of wise and good Laws, we enjoy as much Liberty as can be desired by Any, who aim not at the Confusions of unlimited Licentiousness. And to compleat this Happiness, we are *not only allowed* the free Exercise of the Reformed Religion, (which under some Governments who call themselves *Christian*, is persecuted even unto Death; and we all remember the Time, when we had Reason to apprehend we should have been deprived of it;) but the *Profession* of it is moreover encouraged by *Law*, and the *Practice* of it recommended not only by the *Command* but (which is of greater Influence) by the hearty *Example* also, of our pious and most religious Queen; who *in every Work that she begins in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek her God, she does it with all her Heart, and prospers,* 2 Chron. xxxi. 21.

SERM.  
III.

SERM.

III

If these be Things which are the proper Subjects of Praise and Thanksgiving, and call for the heartiest Expressions of our Gratitude to him who redeemeth our Life from Destruction, and crowneth us with Mercy and Loving-kindness; undoubtedly there is no Nation under the Sun, that has more Reason this Day, than we, to say, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits that he has done unto me? I will offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord.* And O! that Men would indeed, with their Mouths and from their Hearts, by the Confession of their Lips, and in the Actions of their Lives, therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men! That they would exalt him also in the Congregation of the People, and praise him in the Seat of the Elders! That there were in all of us such a Heart, that by making suitable Returns of Praise and Obedience to God, for his past and present Benefits; we might shew ourselves worthy of the Continuance of his Favour, and secure for the future the same Blessings, to ourselves and Posterity! Could we but prevail with ourselves, not to abuse that Plenty wherewith God has blessed us, by Intemperance and Debauchery: Could we in the midst of that Peace, which we enjoy even while War surrounds us, forbear unreasonable Contentions, and lay aside all our Unchristian Heats and Animosities among ourselves: Could we but use that Liberty

we



we most justly value and boast of, so as not to abuse it to Licentiousness and Wantonness: Could we but in any measure persuade ourselves to *practice* the Religion, we are so zealous to *profess*, and banish from a *Christian* and a *reformed* Nation, Infidelity, Profaneness, and Immorality: In a Word, could we but find in our Hearts to *glorify* God worthily for his Mercies, and offer him *Praises* suitable to the wonderful Works which he has done for us; that is, *Praises* accompanied with the Works of Righteousness, so as to *honour* him indeed; this would be truly such an *ordering our Conversation aright*, that we might with good Grounds hope to have the Promise in the Text fulfilled upon ourselves; and, by the Continuance of the same, and the Addition of more Blessings, might see compleated in us *the Salvation of God*. *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifies me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.*

In the Words we may observe these four Things.

1. That God is to be glorified or honoured in our Actions. *He glorifies me.*

2. That, more particularly, upon Occasion of any great Mercy, any remarkable Blessing, or signal Interposition of Providence on our Behalf; we ought to show forth his Glory by the most publick Acknowledgments, by the heartiest Praises and Thanksgivings to him. *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifies me.*

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E

3. That

SERMON. 013. That he who will return Thanks to God acceptably for past Mercies, so as to glorify him in deed; must for the future live suitably to the Profession he publickly makes of his Sense of God's Providence governing the World, and of his entire Dependence upon it. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright.*

## III.

4. That to them who thus order their Conversation aright, here is a Promise added, of still farther Blessings. *I will shew them the Salvation of God.*

1. That God is to be glorified and honoured in all our Actions. This is implied in those Words, *he glorifies me.* For, the declaring in what Manner, or by what Actions God is most glorified; and who the Persons are, that do most truly honour him; is presupposing the Knowledge and Obligation of the Duty itself, that *God is to be glorified or honoured in all our Actions*: That is, *that* we are at all Times, and in all Places, to have constant Regard to him, and Dependence upon him; to have a perpetual Sense of him upon our Minds, and to make continual Acknowledgments to him upon all proper Occasions; that he is the Author and Preserver of our Life and Being; *that* on him we rely, for all the good Things we hope for; and by his Permission, by his Grace and Favour, enjoy whatever Good we at present possess; *that* to him all possible Praise and Thanksgiving is due, for the Prosperity or Success we at any Time meet with, either in our private, or in the publick Affairs; *that* by Him

Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice; *that* SERM.  
 His Blessing is upon a Nation, whenever pious III.  
 Princes are established upon the Throne, and  
 their Affairs prosper under a wise Administration, and Success accompanies their Arms abroad,  
 and Peace and Plenty crowns their Endeavours at Home. On the contrary, *that* ill Success in  
 any of our Undertakings; the blasting and defeating any of our Designs; the Calamities and  
 Afflictions, of whatever Kind they be, that at any Time fall upon us, are still the Strokes of  
 the same Hand, the Appointment of the same wise Providence, the good Pleasure of the same  
 Supreme Governor and Director of all Things; designed for our Correction and Improvement to  
 withdraw our Affections from Vanity and Trust in the World, and to lead us to Repentance and  
 Amendment. This is, according to the wise Man's Advice, *Acknowledging God in all our  
 Ways*: This is promoting a true Sense of Religion and Piety in the World: This is *honouring  
 and glorifying God*. For, *the Glory of God*, is not any Thing accruing to *God himself*; 'tis not  
 any Addition to his Greatness or Happiness, or Accession to the Perfections of *his Nature*.  
 But, as the true Glory of a *Prince*, is the Obedience and Prosperity of his *Subjects*; so the true  
 Notion of the *Glory of God*, is nothing else but the advancing and establishing his *Kingdom* among  
*Men*. And the *Kingdom of God*, saith St. Paul, is, *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. 'Tis something *within ourselves*, as  
 E 2 our



SERM. our Saviour affirms, St. Luke xvii. 21. 'Tis  
 III. the Conformity of the Creature to the Nature  
 and Life of God, to the Law and Happiness of  
 Heaven, by the Obedience of the Gospel, and  
 by the Reconciliation of their Nature to the  
 eternal and unchangeable Law of Righteousness  
 and Holiness. Promoting the *Glory of God* there-  
 fore, is nothing else but advancing the Interest  
 of true Religion, and promoting the Practice of  
 Virtue in the World. For, as Irreligion and  
 Neglect of God, Profaneness or any vicious Prac-  
 tice in those who pretend to believe; do (as is  
 2 Sam. xii. said in the Case of David) give great Occasion to  
 14. the Enemies of God to blaspheme; and they who  
 make their boast in the Law, as St. Paul expresses  
 Rom. ii. it, do, by transgressing the Law, dishonour God;  
 23. and the Name of God through them blasphemed  
 among Unbelievers: So, on the contrary, they  
 who, by unfeigned Piety and Regard to God  
 in the whole Course of their Lives, make their  
 Mat. v. 16. Light to shine before Men; do, by letting others  
 see their good Works, cause Men to glorify their  
 Father which is in Heaven: That is, they bring  
 other Men over to a true Sense of Religion, and  
 persuade them to have a just Value and Esteem  
 for it. This is the true Notion of the *Glory of  
 God*: This is *doing all Things* for his Honour and  
 Glory. And in this Sense 'tis manifest it is our  
 indispensable Duty, to honour and glorify God in  
 all our Actions; by keeping up in our own Minds  
 a constant Sense of him, of his Power and  
 Greatness, of his Wisdom and Providence in

governing the World, and disposing of all Events; and, as much as in us lies, exciting the same Sense of him, and Dependence upon him, in the Minds of others likewise.

2. As God is in some Measure to be honoured or glorified by all our Actions in general; so more particularly, upon Occasion of any great Mercy or Deliverance, upon Occasion of any remarkable Blessing or signal Interposition of Providence on our Behalf, we ought to show forth his Glory by the most publick Acknowledgments, by the highest Expressions of our Gratitude, by the heartiest Praises and Thanksgivings to him. *Who-so offereth Praise glorifies me;* or, as it is in the former Translation *who-so offereth me Thanks and Praise, he honoureth me.* 'Tis all the Return, that weak and dependent Creatures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord and Governor of all Things; and therefore he is graciously pleased to accept it, as a sufficient Reward for all the Benefits that he has done unto us. Our Goodness extendeth not to him, Psal. xvi. 2. neither can Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself, Job xxii. 12. But tho' we cannot make him any Return for his Benefits, yet thankful to him for them we can be; and most inexcusable are we, if we neglect to be so. All that we are able to do, is to make humble Acknowledgments of the Mercies we receive from him; and therefore we ought to do it in the gratefullest, and in the most publick and hearty Manner we can. Ad-

SERMON. verber and Afflictions, such Corrections and  
 III. Chastisements as his fatherly Hand thinks fit at  
 any Time to lay upon us, it becomes us to bear  
 with patient Submission, and silent Resignation  
 to his Will; as being just Reproofs for our Sins,  
 and Calls to Reformation and Repentance: But  
 Blessings and Instances of Mercy, especially  
 publick and national Blessings, call for publick  
 Acknowledgments in such Expressions of Praise  
 and Gratitude, as may declare to the World  
 our being duly sensible from what Hand they  
 come. Upon Account of the Works of Crea-  
 tion, all, even inanimate Creatures, are in Scrip-  
 ture called upon to praise the Lord; that is, to  
 contribute Matter, and afford perpetual Occa-  
 sion by the Meditation of them, to all rational  
 Creatures to sing his Praises; *Praise him* (that is,  
 afford continual Subject-matter for his Praises.)

Pf. cxlviii. 3. *O ye Sun and Moon; praise him all ye Stars of  
 Light, &c.* Works of Providence, are no less  
 great and conspicuous, than those of Creation;  
 and for these Works, Men, who are chiefly and  
 most immediately concern'd in them, and who  
 alone are able to discern and judge of them,  
 are in Scripture required perpetually to praise  
 him: To praise him *perpetually*; because the  
 Number and Variety of them is so great, that  
 no Tongue can worthily or sufficiently extol  
 Pf. cvi. 2. them: *Who can express the noble Acts of the Lord,  
 or shew forth all his Praise?*



'Tis the least that any reasonable Person can SERM.  
III.  
do, in return for great Benefits; to make a thankful Acknowledgment of them, to *him*, from whom he receiv'd them. And yet, because 'tis *all*, (as I before observ'd) that weak and dependent Creatures can pay to *him* who is absolute Lord of all Things; therefore, when it proceeds from a sincere Mind and hearty Affection, 'tis accepted by him as the most valuable Sacrifice. *Ver. 9. of this 50th Psalm; I will take no Bullock, saith God, out of thy House, nor He-goats out of thy Fold; for all the Beasts of the Forest are mine, and so are the Cattle upon a thousand Hills: Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? No: But offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the Day of Trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Again, Psal. cxvi. 12, 17. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all the Benefits that he has done unto me? I will offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord. And Psal. lxxix. 30, 31. I will praise the Name of God with a Song, and will magnify him with Thanksgiving: This also shall please the Lord, better than a Bullock that has Horns and Hoofs.* The same Notion is very elegantly expressed by the Prophet *Hosea, ch. xiv. We will render the Calves of our Lips; i. e. We will return to God such hearty Thanks for his Mercies, as shall be more acceptable to him than the Sacrifices of Calves or Sheep.* The Phrase

SERMON is translated by the LXX, the *Fruit of our Lips*

III. And so St. Paul cites it, *Heb. xiii. 15. Let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise continually; that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name.*

The Obligation to this Duty, is so evident and so reasonable, that it is sometimes in Scripture put for the whole of Religion; and the Neglect of it, marked as a total Defection from God. Thus St. Paul, *Rom. i. 21.* describing the inexcusable Corruption of the Heathen World, puts it principally upon this; *because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were Thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened.* They could not but know God, by his Works; yet they were not *Thankful*, nor glorified him according to that Knowledge; *therefore*, says the Apostle, *they are without Excuse.* The plainer and the more obvious this Duty is, and the more fully God has declared his Acceptance of it, to *Us* who enjoy the Advantage of Revelation; the more unworthy still, and the more inexcusable, is *Unthankfulness* and Neglect of him. 'Tis the perpetual Complaint of the Prophets in the Old Testament, that after all the great Things that God had done for the Nation of the *Jews*, their Ingratitude was most provoking to him; *He made them to ride on the high Places of the Earth, that they might eat the Increase of the Fields, and suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oil out of the flinty Rock: — But Je-*  
shurun

Shurun waxed fat and kicked; — he soon forsook *SEEM*  
 the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the *III*  
 Rock of his Salvation, Deut. xxxii. 13. And 'tis  
 recorded of a great and good King; one, con-  
 cerning whom the Scriptures testify, that in other  
 Things he did that which was right in the Sight of *2 Kings,*  
 the Lord, so that before him there was none *xviii. 3, 5.*  
 equal to him, neither after him arose there any  
 like him; 'tis noted of Him, even of good He-  
 zekiah, as a very great Blemish, as a Thing very  
 unnatural and unbecoming him, and at which  
 God was highly displeased; that after the Lord  
 had destroyed his Enemies, by sending an Angel  
 which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and  
 the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King  
 of Assyria; and after he had miraculously caused  
 him to recover from a mortal Disease; yet he  
 rendred not again according to the Benefit done unto  
 him; for his Heart was lifted up; therefore there  
 was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusa-  
 lem, 2 Chr. xxxii. 21, 25.

The many wonderful Victories that God has  
 granted Us, over the Armies of a Prince more  
 Potent than the King of Assyria; and who has  
 often thought to swallow us up more easily,  
 than Sennacherib did to destroy Jerusalem, and  
 over-run the Land of Judæa; the many wonder-  
 ful Victories, I say, which God has given Us,  
 and particularly the great Successes wherewith  
 he has blessed us this present Year, and for which  
 we are now met together to return him Thanks;  
 are



SERMON. Such as will set as great or a greater Mark of  
 III Ingratitude upon Us, if our real Thankfulness  
 be not answerable to our outward Expressions of  
 Joy, and our consequent Behaviour suitable to  
 both.

The Fatigue and Length of the foregoing  
 Campaign, which had been drawn out into the  
 very Midst of Winter; the extreme Rigour of  
 the ensuing Season, and the Backwardness of the  
 Spring which occasioned such a Scarcity of For-  
 age, that it was impossible to open the Cam-  
 paign before the Summer was far spent; and at  
 the same Time the Artifices made use of by our  
 Enemies to amuse us with false Appearances and  
 deceitful Insinuations of their Desire of Peace,  
 and to try if from thence Means might be found  
 to create Divisions or Jealousies among the Al-  
 lies; gave some Hopes to *France*, that they  
 should have been able to avoid the Blow where-  
 with they were threatned; and that by gaining  
 Time, they might, at least for this Summer,  
 have escaped the Danger to which by their for-  
 mer Losses they seemed to be exposed. But the  
 Providence of God, directing our Counsels, the  
 Unanimity and Steadiness of the Allies, the  
 Prudence and Vigilance of our Generals, and  
 the Indefatigableness of our Troops, entirely  
 disappointed the Enemies Expectation: And the  
 Campaign began with the taking one of the  
 strongest Fortresses in *Europe*; in the Fortifying  
 of which, no Pains, no Cost had been spared,  
 for

for a Trial how far it was possible to increase *Strength* by the Perfection of Art. To prevent further Losses of this Kind, the Enemy resolv-  
ed to hazard a Battle; yet in such Circumstances, that according to the usual Measure and Judgment of Events in War, they thought themselves to run no hazard. But in the Issue it appear'd, that thro' the Courage and Conduct of our Generals, whose Greatness as no History can parallel, so no Character can do Justice to, and thro' the Bravery and Intrepidity of our Troops, which as no Difficulties can withstand, so no Words can sufficiently express; those mighty Intrenchments, those double and treble Defences, wherein the Enemies thought themselves so secure, served only to increase the Glory of the Arms of the Allies, and to convince the Enemy how little Hopes remained of their ever gaining any Advantage over those Troops upon equal Ground, against whom they could not defend themselves upon the *most unequal*. Nevertheless, according to their usual *Vanity*, they boasted of a Victory; unless we will rather ascribe it to their beginning to put on some Degree of *Modesty*, when they declare they esteem it the noblest Achievement and the greatest height of their Glory, to have been able to make a *Retreat* after being beaten, with *less Loss than usual*. But in a Matter of this Nature, 'tis not of so much Importance what *Representations*, what *artful Descriptions* may be made of the Action itself:

'Tis

SER. M. 'Tis the *Effect*, the *Consequences* of great Actions, that afford the truest Judgment of the Greatness of the Success. And here it was sufficiently evident on which Side, and to what Degree Victory declar'd itself; when the immediate Consequence of the Battle, was the laying Siege to another strong Town, and the taking it in a short Time without the Enemies being in a Condition so much as to offer at any Attempt of coming to its Relief.

For these great and continued Successes, where-with the Providence of God has vouchsafed to bless us, let us make thankful Acknowledgment to his divine Majesty, in the Words of David, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty; for all that is in the Heaven, and in the Earth, is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand is Power and Might, and in thine Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name.*

To neglect acknowledging the Hand of Providence in these great Events, would be not only base Ingratitude and Unworthiness, but also the most inexcusable Inconsiderateness. For since the Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong; since the wisest Counsels do not always prosper, nor the best laid Designs constantly



ly take Effect; but the Providence of God over-  
 rules all Events, by secret and undiscern'd  
 Springs; 'tis to his Blessing wholly, we must  
 thankfully acknowledge, that even the best con-  
 certed Measures owe their Success. 'Tis by his  
 Blessing, that *Unanimity* is preserv'd among the  
*Allies*, that *Generals* are inspir'd with *Wisdom*,  
 and *Troops* with *Undauntedness and Bravery*: And  
 'tis by the Continuance of the same Blessing,  
 that *that Unanimity, Conduct and Courage*, are at-  
 tended with Success. *Unanimity* has been, with  
 the greatest Advantage, on our Enemies Side:  
 Their Soldiers sometimes have not been void of  
*Bravery*, nor their *Generals* of *Skill*: Yet have  
 they been defeated in Battle after Battle, till the  
 Strength of the potentest Monarch upon Earth  
 has been almost entirely broken, and his Power  
 reduc'd to an Extremity of Distress. *The King* Ezek. vii.  
*shall mourn, and the Prince shall be clothed with*  
*Desolation, and the Hands of the People of the Land*  
*shall be troubled; I will do unto them after their*  
*Way, and according to their Deserts will I judge*  
*them: That they may see, and know, and consider,* Isa. xli. 20.  
*and understand together, that the Hand of the Lord*  
*has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has creat* Pl. cix. 27.  
*ed it: That they may know that this is thy Hand,*  
*and that thou, Lord, hast done it.*

Nor ought it to be omitted, that next under  
 God who is the first Author of all Victory, all  
 due Honour and Acknowledgment is to be paid  
 to the *Instruments*, by which our Successes have  
 been

SER. been accomplish'd; the Wisdom and Conduct of  
 III. the Generals, and the Bravery of those who executed their Commands. For, tho' Providence has indeed, in the whole Course of the War, very signally interpos'd in our Behalf; yet not by immediate Miracle, as in the Days of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*, when it was said to them by the Prophet, 2 Chron. xx. 17. *Ye shall not need to fight in this Battle, set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the Salvation of the Lord.* But the Blessings of Providence are convey'd to Us, thro' the Wisdom and Diligence of second Causes. For as, on the one Hand without the Blessing of Providence, the greatest Wisdom of Man is Folly, and his Strength Weakness; and a *Horse is counted but a vain Thing to save a Man, neither shall it deliver any Man by its great Strength*: So neither on the other Hand have we now any Reason to expect, that Providence, will work for us direct Miracles, but only bless the Endeavours of subordinate Causes. Wherefore all due Acknowledgments ought to be made to the Instruments, by whose Means we are deliver'd from our Enemies, and by whose Hands is work'd for us the *Salvation of God*. And 'tis noted in Scripture as a great Reproach upon the Children of *Israel*, that they were sometimes ungrateful to the Persons by whom God had work'd their Deliverance, and that they remembered 'em not according to all the Goodness that they had shew'd unto *Israel*, *Judg. viii. 35.*

Pf. xxxiii.  
 17.

3. He that will return Thanks to God acceptably for past Mercies, so as to glorify him indeed; must for the future live suitably to that Profession he pretends to make, of his Sense of God's Providence in governing the World, and of his entire Dependence upon it. *To him, that ordereth his Conversation aright.* The Expressions of our present Joy, must be such as become the Gospel of Christ; and the following Part of our Lives must show, that our Praises proceed not out of feigned Lips; publick Praises and Thanksgivings are acceptable to God, as part of our Religious Worship and Adoration of him; but 'tis then only so, when the Declarations of our Mouths are the real Significations of the Intentions of our Hearts, and our Designs are not to abuse those Mercies which we thank him for. We must so return our Thanks for past Mercies, as that, by their having a due Influence upon us, we may show ourselves worthy of the Continuance of them, and of God's bestowing still more upon us; and then our Praise will be indeed an acceptable Sacrifice. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye RIGHTEOUS,* saith the Psalmist; *for it becometh well the Just to be thankful,* Psal. xxxi. 1. But of the *Wicked* it may truly be affirm'd, that as their *Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an Abomination to the Lord. S E R M.  
III.  
Prov. xxiii  
9.

4. To them who thus order their Conversation aright, here is a Promise added of yet farther Blessings: *I will shew them the Salvation of God.*



SERM. God. They who worthily express their Thanks  
 III. for *past Mercies*, not by debauch'd and unseem-  
 ly Mirth, but by truly honouring and fearing  
 God, may reasonably hope for *more* Occasions of

Isa. i. 19. praising him. If ye be *Willing and Obedient*, ye  
 shall eat the Fat of the Land; and the Lord will  
 delight to do you good. Our Praises and Thankf-  
 givings for *past Victories*, if accompany'd with  
 sincere Obedience, will be, like the lifting up of

Exod. xvii. 11. Moses's Hands upon the Mount, a certain Evi-  
 dence of future Success. God has already blest  
 the Endeavours of our pious Queen with so great  
 Prosperity, that we may justly say with the Psal-  
 mist, *Psal. xx. 6. Now know I that the Lord help-  
 eth his Anointed, and will bear him from his holy  
 Heaven, even with the wholesome Strength of his  
 right Hand. Some put their Trust in Chariots, and  
 some in Horses, but we will remember the Name of  
 our Lord our God: They are brought down and fal-  
 len, but we are risen and stand upright. Nay; we  
 have reasonable Grounds to apply to our Ene-  
 mies the Prophet Nabum's Lamentation over the  
 King of Assyria, ch. iii. v. 19. There is no healing  
 of thy Bruise, thy Wound is grievous; all that hear  
 the Bruit of thee, shall clap their Hands over thee;  
 for upon whom has not thy Wickedness pass'd conti-  
 nually? Or that of the Prophet Isaiah, ch. xiv.  
 v. 16. They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon  
 thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the Man that  
 made the Earth to tremble? That did shake King-  
 doms? That made the World as a Wilderness, and  
 destroy'd*

*destroyed the Cities thereof? That open'd not the* SERM.  
*House of his Prisoners?* The sudden breaking of III.

so great a Power, shews how easily Providence, if we prove ungrateful to him, can even yet disappoint our most probable Hopes, and, after all our Successes, bring us to Confusion. But the Example of Piety set us from the Throne, will, we hope, so effectually discourage all Immorality and Profaneness, and by spreading its Influence afar, excite in the Nation such a Spirit of Virtue and true Religion, that God may be intreated of us *to continue* to bless us with Success, 'till the present bloody and expensive War terminates in such a Peace, as may establish upon a lasting Foot the Liberties of Europe. *The hum-*

*ble shall see this, and be glad: And their Heart shall* 2. Ps. xxxiv.

*live, that seek God. For God will save Sion, and build the Cities of Judah, that Men may dwell there, and have it in Possession: The Posterity also of his* Psal. lxxix. 35.  
*Servants shall inherit it; and they that love his Name, shall dwell therein.*

I add only a Word of Exhortation, and so conclude.

The Ground of our rejoicing, and returning Thanks to God for the Successes of the present War, is, that those Successes tend to secure to us the Ends, for which the War was at first undertaken, *viz. the procuring a safe and lasting Peace, the Support and Establishment of the present Constitution of our Government, the maintaining the Rights and Liberties of ourselves and all Europe,*

SERM. and the Preservation of the Protestant Religion among us.  
III.

*First*, Therefore, if we will shew ourselves truly thankful for the Successes of the *War*, let us endeavour to maintain such Unanimity among ourselves, as may convince our Enemies they can have no Hopes of putting an End to the War, but by consenting to such a *Peace*, as may be *safe and lasting*. And let us so lay aside all unreasonable Divisions and private Animosities, that whensoever it shall please God to put a successful End to the *War abroad*, we may enjoy the blessed Effects of *Peace and Charity*, of *mutual Confidence and Agreement at home*.

*Secondly*, Let us heartily endeavour to promote the Interest of *that Government*, the Support and Establishment whereof is one principal Effect of the Successes for which we publicly return Thanks to God. Let us contribute our utmost, each in our proper Stations, to support a Government so happily established; and to make the executive part of it as easy, and as little burdensome as possible, in the Hands wherein it is lodg'd. *To seek the Peace of the City or Country* wherein we dwell, and in *the Peace thereof* to expect *Peace*, is Men's Duty and Interest even under *bad Governments*: How much more, under the best and most wisely constituted Government in the World, under the easiest and gentlest Administration, under a Government wherein nothing else is designed but the preserving the publick

Jer. xxix.  
7.



lick Welfare and Happiness, the Security and SER.M.  
 Establishment of the Protestant Religion, the III.  
 maintaining the Rights and Liberties both of Nations and of private Persons against Tyranny and Oppression: How much more, I say, in this Case, must all such be utterly inexcusable, who, under any Pretences whatever, foment Divisions and Animosities, Jealousies and groundless Suspicions, to weaken the Hands of the Government, and prevent the perfecting and securing upon a lasting Foot the fore-mention'd great and excellent Ends! We have been rescu'd by wonderful Deliverances, from the Rod of Arbitrary Power, from the Follies of Enthusiasm, and from the Superstitions of Popery: *Should we again grow weary of our own Happiness, and despise the Liberty wherewith God has bless'd us, should we again desire to join in Affinity with the People of these Abominations; would it not be just with God to suffer them still to become Thorns in our Sides, and their Gods to be a Snare unto us, and that he should be angry with us 'till he had consumed us? Ezra. ix. 12.*

*Thirdly,* Let us take great Heed, lest by running into lawless and ungovernable Licentiousness, we abuse and destroy those *Rights and Liberties*, which have long been so earnestly and so justly contended for; and which the Successes we are now returning Thanks for, are the Means of securing to us upon a solid Foundation. God has bless'd us with great and glorious Success a-

SERM. gainst our *Foreign* Enemies; which we hope he  
 III. will continue to us, 'till the *Liberties of Europe*  
 be establish'd by a firm and lasting Peace. Let  
 us not after *That*, become Enemies to *Ourselves*,  
 by a Licentiousness impatient of the most neces-  
 sary Restraints; lest by our own Unthankfulness  
 and *Intestine* Confusions, we deprive ourselves of  
 the Benefit of a Blessing purchas'd with so much  
 Blood and Treasure; and provoke God to suffer  
 us to destroy ourselves by losing our *Liberty*  
 wholly, while we affect more of it than is just  
 and reasonable, or consistent with good Order and  
 Government and the publick Safety. For as,  
 on the one Hand, the Abuse of Arbitrary Power  
 in *Governors*, has generally been the Occasion of  
 putting People upon recovering the Liberties  
 they had lost; so on the other Hand, Licenti-  
 ousness or Abuse of Liberty in the *People*, tends  
 always to such Confusions, as terminate usually  
 in Arbitrary Power again.

*Fourthly*, And above all, let us take Care to  
*practise* the Religion we *profess*, and for the Pre-  
 servation whereof we are so highly concern'd.  
 One of the Principal Benefits of all the glorious  
 Successes God has bless'd us with, is the securing  
 the Reform'd Religion amongst us, against the  
 Attempts of Popish Superstition. But what will  
 it profit us, to bear the Name and Profession of  
 a *Reform'd Religion*, if in our Practise and, in  
 Reality we have *no Religion at all*? Of what Use  
 will it be to us, to be secur'd from the Vanities  
 and

and Superstitions of Popery; if on the contrary SERM.  
III.  
we run into Atheism, Irreligion and Profane-  
ness?

Christianity itself, our Saviour assures us, is of no Advantage to those who do not obey *the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*; but their Portion will be among *Unbelievers*. In like Manner neither can any particular *Reformation of Religion* from the grossest Corruptions that have crept into it, be of any Benefit to those, whose *Manners* are not reform'd together with their Profession.

God, *who commandeth the Light to shine out of Darkness*, grant that *the Light of the glorious Gos-<sup>2</sup> Cor. iv. pel of Christ, who is the Image of God, may so shine<sup>4, 6.</sup> in our Hearts, as that we may bring forth Fruit worthy of that *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ*.*



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S E R M O N

Preached before the

Q U E E N,

At St. *JAMES*'s Chapel on *Wednesday* the 8th of *March*, 1709-10. being the Anniversary of Her Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne.

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*Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTY'S Special Command.*

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2 CHRON. XXXI. 21.

*And in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and prospered.*

SERM. IV.  THERE is so necessary a Connexion between the Happiness of Governors, and that of the People committed to their Charge; that as there lies an indispensable Obligation upon Princes and all that are in Authority, to govern in the Ways of Piety and Righteousness, in order

der to the Welfare and Prosperity of the Pub-  
lick, as well as upon account of their own Pri-  
vate Duty to God; so the People have always  
great Reason to be very thankful to God, when  
under the Administration of pious and religious  
Princes, they enjoy both in the natural Course of  
Things, the unspeakable Advantages of Peace  
and good Government, and have moreover a par-  
ticular Title to the extraordinary Blessings of Pro-  
vidence, and to all the Promises God has made in  
Scripture to the Righteous, of national Prosperity.

SERM.  
IV.

God, who is perfect Goodness, and who com-  
municates to all his Creatures such Proportions  
of Happiness, as is suitable to the original or im-  
proved Capacities of their Natures; has so fram-  
ed and constituted the Nature of Man in this  
present State, that as *every particular Person*,  
with regard to the Temper of his own Mind, is  
in great Measure either Happy or Miserable  
within himself, in Proportion as his Passions are  
more or less subject to the Direction and Govern-  
ment of right Reason; so *Numbers of Men in So-*  
*cieties* likewise, do proportionably either promote  
or destroy each other's Happiness, as their Deal-  
ings one with another are either just and righte-  
ous, equitable and charitable, honourable and  
publick-spirited; or, on the contrary, base and  
malicious, deceitful and unrighteous, violent and  
oppressive. The Happiness which Mankind  
would enjoy even here upon Earth, if all Men's  
Passions were kept subject to Reason, and every

SERM. private Interest made subservient to the Publick;  
 IV. is greater than can be express'd in Words, or  
 than can easily be conceived in the Imagination.  
 And to preserve that Happiness constant and  
 perpetual, among Persons of such a Disposition;  
 there would be wanting little other *Government*,  
 but that of Right Reason; and few other *Laws*,  
 than only the Dictates of Conscience, which are  
 the Law of the most High. But this being the  
 State, not of *Earth*, but of *Heaven*; not of the  
*present* World, but of the *new Heaven* and *new*  
*Earth*, wherein is to dwell universal Righteous-  
 ness; that which in the next Place is most desir-  
 able, and which is the highest Degree of Happi-  
 ness that can in fact be attained to by Mankind  
 here upon Earth; is, that the Practise of Righte-  
 ousness and true Virtue may be established and  
 encouraged by *Human Laws*; that the *Execution*  
 of those Laws be intrusted in just and wise Hands;  
 and that Governors, both Supreme and Subordi-  
 nate, at the same Time that they impartially ad-  
 minister Justice to others, be themselves *Exam-*  
*ples* of that Virtue and Goodness, which the De-  
 sign of all good Laws is to promote the Practise  
 of. That so, those who, *fear not God*, nor *love*  
*Righteousness*, may yet either thro' *Shame*, or the  
*Fear of Men*, be in some Measure restrained with-  
 in the Bounds of their Duty; and, if they will  
 not, out of a Sense of Religion, endeavour to do  
*Good* in the World; yet at least, by the Coerci-  
 on



on of wise Laws, that they may be prevented S E R M.  
from being able to do much *Mischief* in it. IV.

As the *greatest Calamity* that can befall Mankind, is to be left in a State of *absolute Anarchy and Confusion*, to devour each other like wild Beasts; in a State, wherein Force gives Right to all Manner of Oppression, and Fraud and Violence are practised with all Impunity and without Restraint: And the *next* to this extreme Calamity, is *bad Government*; wherein either Laws promote the Mischiefs they ought to prevent; or Governors, against Law, encourage those very Practises which 'tis the whole Intention of their Office to restrain; and Princes become Terrors to their Neighbours, and Destroyers of their own Subjects; and the Oppressed cry, and no Man delivers them; and Violence sits in the Seat of Judgment, and Extortion and Rapine are establish'd as it were by Law: As such *bad Government*, I say, is the next great Calamity to having *no Government at all*: So, on the contrary, *next* to that Angelical State, that *State of Paradise*, wherein there would be little need of any other Laws or Authority than the fear of God; the *next great Blessing* Mankind is capable of, is *good Government*: Government, which truly answers the Design of its Establishment; which, in real Effects, represents the Divine Authority; which, by the whole Exercise of its Power, promotes the Honour of God in the World, and the publick Welfare and Happiness of Mankind.

Accord-

SERM.

IV.

Accordingly the principal Instruments which God generally makes use of, either in conveying his greatest temporal Blessings to Mankind, or in inflicting his severest Punishments on any Nation or People, are *good or bad Princes*.

'Tis remarkable in the History of the Jewish Nation, that when *they rejected the Lord, that he should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. viii. 7. The Threatning wherewith the Prophet was commanded to endeavour to deter them from their disobedient Purpose, was this, *ver. 9. Protest solemnly unto them, and show them the Manner of the King that shall reign over them.---He will take your Sons, and appoint them for himself, for his Chariots, and to be his Horsemen; and some shall run before his Chariots: And he---will set them to ear his Ground, and to reap his Harvest, and to make his Instruments of War, and Instruments of his Chariots: And he will take your Fields and your Vineyards and Oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his Servants.---And ye shall cry out in that Day, and the Lord will not bear you.* There have been some so unreasonable, as to interpret this Passage, not as a threatning of Punishment express'd in the Character of a bad Government, but as a Delegation of that Power which God intended all Governors should have a Right to exercise. But the whole Scope and Connexion of the Words, evidently shows the contrary. And the Histories of the Eastern Nations of the World, who have long lived under the Exercise

of such absolute arbitrary Dominion, show how SERM.  
 inexpressibly great a Calamity such Governments IV.  
 are to Mankind. And the Experience even of  
 a neighbouring Nation alone, which from one  
 of the potentest and most flourishing Kingdoms  
 upon Earth, has been reduced even to the ex-  
 tremest Misery; is a sufficient Evidence of this  
 Truth. Most reasonably therefore, and as a  
 most proper Argument to deter the *Jews* from  
 their wanton Disposition of rebelling against  
 God's Government, might the Prophet threaten  
 them with being made subject to such a Domi-  
 nion.

On the contrary, in those Passages of Scrip-  
 ture, wherein are promised the greatest Temporal  
 Blessings that God ever bestows on any Na-  
 tion or People, such Promises are frequently and  
 most emphatically express'd under Descriptions  
 of mild and gentle Governments; of Govern-  
 ments wherein Justice is establish'd by wise  
 Laws, or administer'd by the Will of Righteous  
 Princes. In the *lxxii<sup>d</sup> Psalm*, the Description of  
 a Prince, the Greatness and Prosperity of whose  
 Government was to be a Type of the Blessedness  
 of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*; is this, *He shall*  
*judge the People according unto Right, and defend*  
*the Poor: — He shall keep the simple Folk by their*  
*Right, and defend the Children of the Poor, and*  
*punish the wrong Doer: — He shall come down like*  
*the Rain into a Fleece of Wool, even as the Drops*  
*that water the Earth: In his Time shall the Righte-*  
*ous flourish, yea, and abundance of Peace so long as*



SERM. *the Moon endureth:—He shall deliver the Poor*

IV. *when he crieth, the Needy also, and him that hath no Helper: He shall be favourable to the Simple and Needy, and shall preserve the Souls of the Poor.* And in the lx. Chapter of *Isaiah*, the final Restoration of *Jerusalem*, which perhaps is no other than a Description of the Happiness of the *Heavenly State* itself; because a nobler and loftier Figure could not be borrow'd from any Thing to be found on Earth, is express'd by this Similitude: *ver. 17. I will make thy Officers Peace, and thy Exaltors Righteousness: Violence shall no more be heard in the Land, Wasting nor Destruction within thy Borders; but thou shalt call thy Walls Salvation, and thy Gates Praise:—Thy People also shall be all Righteous.*

Some Proportions of this Blessedness, both by the natural Consequence of Things and by the positive Direction and Interposition of Providence, do, even in this present mixt and uncertain State of Things, always attend any Nation; when Unrighteousness and Debauchery are in any Measure discourag'd by the good Disposition of the People, or by the pious Endeavours of a Wise and Religious Governor. We of this Nation have (Thanks be to God) experienc'd good and very great Effects of this Kind: And, was it not for Unthankfulness and Unworthy Returns for God's Blessings, we might have Reason still to expect more. The Jewish Nation, whose History was written for our Example, was always blessed with singular Prosperity, when

when under any pious Prince they lived in remarkable Obedience to the Law of God; and never in a more conspicuous Manner, than in the Days of that excellent Person, of whom it is recorded in the Words of the Text, that *in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart, and Prospered.*

The Words are Part of the Character of that pious Prince *Hezekiah* King of *Judah*, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *he did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord, according to all that David his Father had done*; and that he had kept such a Passover, as had not been kept before, from the Days of David unto that Day; and that he wrought that which was good and right and truth, before the Lord his God; and in every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his Heart: And the Text adds, that he Prospered; and that God blessed him according to his singular Piety. For when *Sennacherib* King of *Affyria* came up against him and against *Jerusalem* with a mighty Host to take it, the Lord sent an Angel, (2 Chr. xxxii. 21.) which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of *Affyria*, so that he returned with Shame of Face to his own Land; And the Lord saved *Hezekiah* and guided him on every Side, and he was magnified in the Sight of all Nations.

SERM.  
IV.

SERM.

IV.

*Nations from thenceforth, v. 23.* We cannot in this profane and licentious Age, apply to ourselves the Zeal wherewith the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* assisted their pious King in his earnest Endeavours to restore among them the Religion and Piety of their Ancestors: Neither, if we could, have we any Warrant to expect such *miraculous* Interpositions of the immediate Hand of God on our Behalf, as his peculiar People then experienc'd. But the Endeavours of that pious Princess whom God has now set over us, to discourage all Immorality, Debauchery and Profaneness, and to promote the Practise of true Religion and Piety in this Nation; are not inferior to the good Dispositions of any of the pious Kings of *Judah*: Nor are the Successes wherewith the Providence of God has bless'd us in this Auspicious Reign, against the common Enemies of our Religion and Liberties; much less remarkable, than the Deliverances work'd formerly by direct Miracle for the Children of *Israel*.

In the Words we may observe,

1. That the first and principal Care of good Princes, is to promote the Interest of true Religion and Virtue among the People committed to their Charge. *In every Work that he began in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law and in the Commandments, to seek his God; he did with all his Heart.* Princes are the Vice-gerents of God upon Earth; intrusted with Power from him



him for the Government of Men in Societies, SERM.  
and for the Maintenance of Peace and Justice IV.  
and good Order in the World. This Power is  
vested in different Hands, and limited with different Regulations, and exercised in different Manners, according to the Laws and Customs of different Nations: But the Power itself is of Divine Original and Appointment, being the Ordinance and Constitution of God; for which Reason Governors, both Supreme and Subordinate, are stiled in Scripture, *Gods*, and the immediate Ministers of God. Having therefore this Power by Divine Appointment, and representing God in the Exercise of it; 'tis manifest their first and chiefeft Care ought to be, to imploy it in advancing *his* Honour and Glory, from whom they received it. Power without Goodness, and Wisdom not imployed in the promoting of Righteousness, is the justest Object of Men's Fear and Aversion: But when those who are the Ministers of God in the Exercise of Power, imitate him also in that more lovely Perfection of Goodness; and make it their principal Business to incourage that universal Virtue, the Establishment of which in the World, is in the most acceptable Manner fulfilling the Will of God, and promoting his Honour and Glory; then do they most eminently verify that Character the Scripture gives of them, *I have said ye are Gods, and ye are all the Children of the Most High.* The Instructions upon this Head,

SERM. Head, given by *David* in his dying Words, are very remarkable. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. *These be the last Words of David: David the Son of Jesse said; and the Man who was raised up on high, the Anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel said, the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue; the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me: He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God. He must himself rule in the Fear of God; and he must make it his chief and principal Care, to cause Others to fear him likewise. Accordingly we find the principal Part of the Character of all the good Kings of Judah, whose History is related in Scripture; taken from their Zeal to promote the Service and Worship of God, and the Establishment of true Religion in their Kingdom. Many of the Methods they used, agreeable to the then present State and Circumstances of Things, and to the extraordinary Commissions they had; are by no Means indeed to be imitated under the Gospel-State, or drawn into Example by the Practise of Christian Princes, who have no such special and immediate Warrants from God: But in general 'tis still their Duty, by all wise and Christian Methods, by all Methods suitable to the Nature and Design of the Gospel, to employ the Power and Authority God has given them, in promoting the Interest of the true Religion, in encouraging Virtue and discouraging Vice. It is still true, that a wise*

*King*

*King scattereth the Wicked, and bringeth the Wheel* SERM.  
over them, Prov. xx. 26. 'Tis still true, that IV.

*Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil; that the Magistrate, supreme or subordinate, beareth not the Sword in vain; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil.* Rom. xiii. 4. that he is, sent of God for the Punishment of evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. ii. 14.

The only Caution here necessary to be us'd, is, that true Religion, in the promoting whereof the principal Care of good Princes is to be employed, be always understood to consist; not in Matters of Notion, Speculation, and Dispute; not in Questions of Controversy, and uncertain Opinions; not in Matters of mere Humane and Temporary Authority; but in Obedience to the plain Precepts of the Gospel of Christ; in the great and Fundamental Duties of Piety towards God, Righteousness towards Men, and Temperance in the Government of ourselves; on the Practice of which, depends the Happiness of this Life, and of that which is to come: And that the Things to be principally discouraged by them, are Profaneness and Impiety, Unrighteousness and Iniquity, Debauchery and all Immorality.

Now as the *Nature and Derivation* of their Authority itself, so likewise *the End and Design* of all Government, obliges good Princes to make the promoting of Religion and Virtue among the



SERM. People, their principal and greatest Care. For

IV. the ultimate End and Design of all Government, is the Peace and Safety, the Welfare and Prosperity of the Publick, of the Society or Community united under such a Form of Government. Now 'tis manifest that nothing promotes this great End, so much as the Practice of Religion and true Virtue. For Virtue and a true Sense of Religion, obliges every Subject, every Member of the Society, in whom it is found: it obliges him *beforehand*, by a much stronger and securer Tie, to do all the same Things *freely and willingly, heartily and sincerely, in publick and in private*; which the best and wisest Laws can but compel those who want such a Sense of Religion, to do *unwillingly, slightly, and superficially, in publick Appearance only, and in the Sight of Men*. Religion therefore and true Virtue, if they prevailed in the World, would obtain the same End *fully and effectually*, which the best and wisest Laws can do but *in Part*: And Laws are made only to supply, in the best Manner they can, the Want of true Religion and Virtue among Men. *The Law is not made for a Righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for the Unholy and the Profane.* 1 Tim. i. 9. For the same Reasons therefore, that 'tis very necessary for the Establishment of good Government in the World, that Men should be perpetually under the restraint of wise and wholesome *Laws*; for the same Reasons 'tis

much

much more desirable, (and ought to be the great SERM.  
Aim and Design, the main and constant Endeavour of those in Power and Authority,) that IV.  
*Religion and true Virtue* should universally prevail; the want of which only it is, that introduces the necessity of any coercive Laws or Penalties at all.

The *Means* by which good Princes are to promote the Practice of true Religion in the World, is not (as was before observed) by putting Difficulties upon such as are weak or erroneous, in Matters of Speculation and Dispute, or in the Externals of Religion; but by securing the Foundation of Virtue and good Manners, upon which the Happiness of a Nation does immediately depend; by maintaining the Honour of God, and keeping up a due Sense and Acknowledgment of his Providence, in the Minds of Men, by preserving Faithfulness and Truth, Integrity and Uncorruptness in the transacting and managing of all publick and private Affairs; and by effectually discouraging all Immorality and debauchery, which enfeeble the Spirits, and destroy the Power and Honour of a Nation.

This is principally done by good *Example*, and by countenancing such as are desirous to follow it. For as the Sun diffuses Heat and Vigor, together with its Rays of Light, thro' the spacious Universe; and insensibly promotes in all Things, by its powerful Influence, both Life and Growth, Motion and Action; so the Example of a pious Prince, gives far greater countenance to Religion,

SERM. on, than the strictest Laws; encourages well-

IV. disposed Persons, and gives Life and Spirit to all pious Designs; makes Vice and Immorality ashamed to shew its Head; or at least gives a Check to the more open Profaneness, of such as would publicly despise and throw Contempt upon Religion: Whereas, on the contrary, when the Supreme Authority of a Nation, when the *Light of the World* is itself *Darkness*; how great must that *Darkness* be? When the *Head is sick*, and the *whole Heart faint*, what Health and Soundness can the whole Body enjoy?

Further: The next Means, by which good Princes may promote the Interest of Religion, and the Practice of Virtue in the World; next to the Incouragement afforded by their own good Example; is by taking all fit Care, that Men be not corrupted in their first Principles by Ignorance and gross Neglect, by carelessness and want of due Instruction. 'Tis recorded of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*, a most remarkable Part of his good Character, *That he sent to his Princes, and appointed Levites and Priests to teach in the Cities of Judah; and they had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the Cities of Judah, and taught the People.* 2 Chr. xviii. 7. And in this particular, as her present Majesty has exceeded the Piety even of the best and most religious Princes among her Predecessors by considerably augmenting out of her own Revenue the maintenance of those who by divine Appoint



Appointment are set apart to the Office of teaching and instructing Men in Matters of Religion; so, that charitable Disposition which seems daily to increase and spread in the Nation, of educating and instructing poor Children in the Principles of Religion, and in the Methods of Industry and honest Labour, it may reasonably be hoped will contribute in due Time to the Accomplishment of that Prophecy, that *the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Seas.*

2. 'Tis observed in the Text, that the *Effect* of Princes making it their chief Care to promote the Interest of true Religion and Virtue; is, *the Prosperity of themselves and their People.* In every Work that he began, in the Service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God; he did it with all his Heart, and *Prosper'd.* In the parallel Place, 2 Kings xviii. 7. The Word *Prospered* is thus more largely expressed; *the Lord was with him, and he Prospered, whithersoever he went forth.* We find in the Histories both of ancient and modern Times, that it has *sometimes* indeed happened otherwise; and that good and pious Princes have, for the Sins and Iniquities of their People, or for other secret and wise Reasons of Providence, been very unsuccessful in their Affairs, and fallen under great Calamities. But generally speaking, and in the usual Course of Providence, good and religious Princes have been blessed with Success, and great

SERMON. Prosperity. And of this, there are two obvious  
 IV. Reasons. *First*, The natural Tendency of the  
 Thing itself. When Princes govern in the Fear  
 of God, according to Law and Equity, being  
 Ministers of God to the People for good, and  
 having no other Interest but the Welfare of the  
 Publick; *Mercy and Truth will preserve their Per-*  
*sons, and their Thrones will be upholden by Mer-*  
*cy. Prov. xx. 28. When Kings become nursing Fa-*  
*thers, and Queens nursing Mothers to the Church*  
*of God; and the Example of their Virtue and*  
*Piety, renders them as conspicuous as their high*  
*Station: The Hearts of the Subjects will na-*  
*turally be filled with Love and Affection, with E-*  
*steem and Veneration for them, as well as with a*  
*Sense of Duty towards them; and the Authority*  
*they are vested with, will be only such a pater-*  
*nal Care, in the Exercise of which they will just-*  
*ly be look'd upon and honoured as Benefactors.*  
 This is very elegantly express'd by *David* in the  
 Place before-cited: where, after those Words of  
 Instruction, *He that ruleth over Men must be just,*  
*ruling in the Fear of God,* he immediately adds,  
*And he shall be as the Light of the Morning, when*  
*the Sun arises, even a Morning without Clouds; as*  
*the tender Grass springing out of the Earth, by clear*  
*shining after Rain. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.* When, in  
 Consequence of this the People obeys, not only  
 for Fear, but also for Conscience-sake; and not  
 for Conscience-sake only, but also out of Love  
 and Choice, in a Sense of their own Happiness:  
 When

When they become unanimous in their Counsels S. R. M. and Designs; and every one, free from all Fear IV. of any Ineroachment upon their just Rights, their Liberties and Properties, discharges his Duty in his proper Station with Fidelity and Cheerfulness: This, in the Nature of Things, will establish a Government with Firmness and Security at Home; and spread Dread and Terror, upon its *Enemies abroad.* *Righteousness*, in the natural Tendency of the Thing itself, *will exalt a Nation*; as, on the contrary, *Sin* will be a *Reproach to any People.* But, *Secondly*; the Providence of God, does moreover in a peculiar Manner most frequently concern itself, in blessing and prospering the Designs of pious Princes: *The King that faithfully judges the Poor, his Throne shall be established for ever.* Prov. xxix. 14. Notwithstanding the greatest natural Security from second Causes, yet, *except the Lord keep the City, the Watch-man Soldier may awake in vain.* Here therefore is the Establishment of the Throne of the Righteous; that it is under the sure protection of *him*, whose *Kingdom ruleth over all.* We read, 2 Chron. xvii. 10. (where is set down the good Character before-cited of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*;) that the *Lord was with him*, and *established the Kingdom in his Hand*; and the fear of the Lord fell upon all the Kingdoms of the Lands that were round about *Judah*, so that they made no War against *Jehoshaphat.* And we of this Nation enjoy at this Day the happy Effects of the Blessings



SERMON. of Providence upon the pious Princess he has set  
 IV. over us; in giving her such signal Successes against  
 the common Enemy, as we may reasonably hope  
 will soon terminate in a safe, honourable, and  
 lasting Peace.

3. It remains in the *Third* and last Place, by  
 Way of Application, to consider briefly what the  
*Duty* of Subjects is, who have the Happiness of  
 living under such Governors, as follow the Ex-  
 ample, and answer the Character given of good  
 King *Hezekiah* in the Text.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. 'Tis their Duty to return Thanks to  
 God, for the Benefits they enjoy under the hap-  
 py Influence of a Pious Example and a wise Ad-  
 ministration. 'Tis *St. Paul's* Exhortation, not  
 only to pray, but also to give Thanks, for *Kings,*  
*and for all that are in Authority;* as being those  
 under whose Protection we lead a quiet and peace-  
 able Life, and by whose Care we are encouraged  
 to live in all Godliness and Honesty. To be thank-  
 ful to God, whose Instruments and Vicegerents  
 pious Governors are; (and who is therefore in  
*this Respect* in a more especial Manner the prin-  
 cipal and supreme Cause of the Blessings convey-  
 ed to Us through their Hands;) is rendering unto  
 God the Things that are God's, at the same Time  
 that we make just Acknowledgment to *Cæsar* of  
 what is due to *Cæsar*.

And as we must not be unthankful to God,  
 for Blessings received; so we must take Care,  
 not to express our Joy and Gratitude in an im-  
 proper

proper Manner. We must declare our Thank-SERM.  
fulness, not by unseemly Mirth, not in Rioting IV.  
and Debauchery; but by the sincere Practice of  
that Religion, the Preservation of which is the  
Conclusion of all our Prayers; and by Acts of  
Steady Affection to that Government, the Sup-  
port of which is the Foundation of all our  
Hopes.

2dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under pious  
Governors, not only to acknowledge, that, *see-*  
*ing by them They enjoy great Quietness, and that*  
*very worthy Deeds are done unto the Nation by*  
*Their Providence, therefore they accept it always* Acts xxiv.  
*and in all Places with all Thankfulness;* but they <sup>2.</sup>

must show forth their real Gratitude, by Imita-  
tion of the Example set them from the Throne,  
and by a strict Observation of the Laws against  
Profaneness, Debauchery and Immorality, so  
often recommended to them from thence, as the  
only certain Means of securing the Continuance  
of the Blessing and Favour of God, both upon  
them and their Prince. They must shew forth  
their Gratitude by uniting all Hearts and Hands  
to promote, each in their proper Station, with  
all Diligence and Faithfulness, the Safety and  
Honour of the Government; by laying aside all  
private Animosities and Contentions among  
themselves; and by putting a Stop (as much as  
in them lies) to all groundless Jealousies and un-  
reasonable Suspicions, which tend to abate Men's  
Affection towards their Governors, and to bring  
Difficulties

SERM. Difficulties upon the Administration of publick Affairs.

IV.



3dly. 'Tis the Duty of Subjects under all, and much more under pious and religious Governours, to offer up constantly for them, according to the Exhortation of the Apostle, *Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions*: That God would be pleased to give them Understanding and Knowledge, Strength and Ability, to go in and out before a great People; that he would enable them to bear the great Weight and Burden of Publick Business, assist them to undergo the many Difficulties arising from the Uncertainties of all humane Affairs, and bless them in all their just Undertakings, with Prosperity and Success. God has hitherto blessed her present Majesty with unparallel'd Success, against the common Enemy of our Religion and Liberties: 'Tis our Duty to pray for a Continuation of the same Success, 'till the War abroad shall be brought to its desired Conclusion; and that, after that, we may be made a happy People at home, by Peace and Unity and mutual Confidence among ourselves; by a firm Establishment of the wise Constitution of our Government, for a *Succession* of many Generations; by a sincere Reformation of Manners among all Sorts and Degrees of Men; and an universal hearty Concern for the great and weighty Matters of Religion, more than for Things of Controversy and uncertain Dispute: That Humility, Love and



and Peaceableness, Righteousness and Equity, SERM.  
Diligence, Faithfulness and Truth, may possess IV.  
the Hearts of Men of all Ranks and Conditions  
among us: That God would be pleased to in-  
spire her Majesty with a discerning Heart, a  
wise and understanding Spirit; to bless her with  
Able Counsellors, with Righteous and Just Of-  
ficers in all Places of Trust; with a Dutiful and  
Obedient People: That *the Queen may rejoice in  
thy Strength, O Lord, and be exceeding glad of thy  
Salvation: That thou mayest give her her Heart's  
Desire, and not deny her the Request of her Lips:  
That thou mayest prevent her with Blessings of  
Goodness, and make her Honour great in thy Salva-  
tion, and crown her with Glory and great Worship:  
That thou mayest give her a long Life here, and  
a longer and happier hereafter, even for ever and  
ever.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
Parish-Church of St. James's, Westminster,  
On Tuesday, November 7, 1710.

Being the Day of Thanksgiving for  
the Successes of the fore-going  
Campaign.

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PSAL. cxlv. 2.

*Every Day will I bless thee, and I will praise  
thy Name for ever and ever.*

SERM.  
V.

**T**HE particular Occasion upon which this Psalm was composed, is not known: But in general, that it was occasioned by some extraordinary Blessing, such as Success and Victory over powerful Enemies, or some other like remarkable Interposition of Providence; is evident from the whole Course of the Psalm. For the Author of it beginning with high Expressions of Joy and Thankfulness, (v. 1.) *I will extol thee, O God, my King, and will bless thy Name for ever and ever; every Day will*

I bleſs thee, and I will praiſe thy Name for ever and ever; proceeds in the 4th Verſe to declare, that the Ground of this his Joy and Thankfulneſs, was ſome mighty Act: ſome publick and eminent Interpoſition of Providence in his Behalf: One Generation, ſays he, ſhall praiſe thy Works to another, and ſhall declare thy mighty Acts; I will ſpeak of the glorious Honour of thy Majeſty, and of thy wondrous Works: and Men ſhall ſpeak of the Might of thy terrible Acts, and I will declare thy Greatneſs: And ver. 11. They ſhall ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power; to make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majeſty of his Kingdom. After which he goes on, from the Conſideration of paſt Mercies, to infer the Reaſonableneſs of Men's depending upon the ſame Providence for the Continuance of his Protection in Time to come; if by a religious Behaviour they approve themſelves worthy of his Care and Favour. Ver. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him faithfully: he will fulfil the Deſire of them that fear him, he alſo will hear their Cry and will ſave them: The Lord preſerveth all them that love him, but all the Wicked will he deſtroy. And then he concludes in the laſt Verſe, with Expreſſions of Joy and Thankſgiving, as he began in the firſt; My Mouth ſhall ſpeak the Praise of the Lord, and let all Fleſh bleſs his holy Name for ever and ever.



SERM. The Application of this Discourse of the  
 V. Psalmist, to our *present* Occasion; is very obvious. God has done for *Us*, Things no less wonderful and remarkable, than for the *Jews* of old; and it becomes us to praise him after the same Pattern, which the inspired Psalmist drew up for *their* Use. It becomes *Us every Day* to give *Thanks* unto him, and to *praise his Name for ever and ever*. It concerns us to take heed that we behave ourselves worthily, upon the Mercies we have receiv'd; that we may be found in the Number of those that *love him*, and of those that *call upon him in Faithfulness and Truth*. And when *this* is our Case; then it will become us with humble Confidence, to depend upon his Promise for further Protection, that he who is *righteous in all his Ways*, and *holy in all his Works*, will continue to be *nigh unto us*; to *preserve* and support us; and be always ready to hear and *fulfil the Desire* of them that *fear and obey him*.

The Words of the Text consist of two Parts.

- 1<sup>st</sup>. A Declaration of that *Disposition of Mind*, which ought to be found in such Persons, as have received great Mercies from God; And,
- 2<sup>dly</sup>. An Account of the *outward Effects* of that pious Disposition, in Acts of publick Praise and Thanksgiving to God.

The former is a grateful and due *Sense* of God's Goodness. The latter, is the *Fruit and Consequence* of that just Sense of Things upon the Mind;

Mind; showing forth itself in external Acts of SERMON V. Worship, and in calling upon others to join with us in *publishing* the Praises of him, whose Power is so conspicuous in all great Events, and whose *tender Mercies are over all his Works*.

But there is no need to insist separately upon each Part of this Distinction; because, though the Things themselves are really *distinct*, yet they must always be supposed to *accompany* each other. For where the Mind is *inwardly* and deeply possessed with a just Sense of the Goodness of God, the *external Behaviour* cannot but of Necessity be answerable to the *inward Sense* and Disposition of the Mind; And where the *outward Actions* are full of proper Expressions of Gratitude, and professed Acknowledgments of the Divine Goodness; though *God only can know* the Heart, yet *Men* must always charitably *suppose*, that the *inward Sense* and Disposition of the *Mind*, is agreeable to the Character of the *outward Action*. There is no need therefore for *Us* to distinguish, between *Thankfulness* as 'tis a Habit and Temper of the *Mind*, or as 'tis an *Expression* of that Temper in our *Behaviour and Actions*. For these Things ought always to go together, as in sincere Persons they really do; And in the Un sincere, where they do not, yet to the Eye of the World, which is all *We* can judge of, they must of Necessity appear to do so. *We* cannot, therefore, but treat of these Things as Synonymous; and when we exhort Men to  
 3 the

SERM.

V.

the Duty of Thankfulness, must always understand those *external Actions*, which are the proper *Expressions*, and ought always to be the *real Significations*, of a *grateful Mind*. Wherefore, without distinguishing between these two Branches, we may look upon the Text as one single Proposition; and take the latter Part, as only an Explanation of the former. *Every Day will I bless thee*; or, as it is in the old Translation. *Every Day will I give Thanks unto thee; and praise thy Name for ever and ever.*

That which is more particularly remarkable in the Words; is the Expression, *Every Day*. As if *every Day* of our Lives were to be a Day of Thanksgiving; and our Expressions of Gratitude, as uninterrupted as our Breath. The Meaning is; that, as we are directed by the Apostle to *Pray without ceasing*; and, by our Lord to petition our heavenly Father constantly for the Continuance of our *daily Food*, in Acknowledgment of our perpetual Dependence upon Providence, for the very Breath we draw, and for the Bread we *daily eat*: So we ought to be no less constantly and habitually thankful to God for the Benefits *we have received*, than we are importunate in our Petitions to him for the Things *we want*. In every Thing giving Thanks, as St. Paul expresses it, *1 Thes. v. 18.* and *Eph. v. 20.* *Giving Thanks always for all Things unto God, even the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

There



There are some Things, which we enjoy in com-  
 mon with *all the Creatures* of God; Life and Breath,  
 and the common Protection and Preservation of  
 Providence. And for these, we are to join in that  
 great and universal Choir, which St. *John* in his  
 Vision so elegantly describes, *Rev. v. 13. and*  
*iv. 11. Every Creature which is in Heaven and*  
*on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as*  
*are in the Sea, and all that are in them, heard I,*  
*saying; ——— Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive*  
*Glory and Honour and Power; for thou hast creat-*  
*ed all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are and*  
*were created.* There are other Gifts, peculiar  
 to *Men*; Understanding and Knowledge, Rea-  
 son and the Use of Speech, a Capacity of search-  
 ing out and meditating upon the Works of God.  
 And for these Faculties, we are to express our  
 Gratitude, by imploying them in his Service;  
 by promoting his Glory, and by so behaving  
 ourselves in the Exercise of our Dominion over  
 the inferior Creation, that *all the Works* of God,  
 over which he has made *Man* the Lord, may  
 with *our Tongues praise him, and magnify him*  
*for ever.*

There are other Blessings peculiar to particu-  
 lar *Nations*: And for these we are to glorify  
 God, by a particular thankful Acknowledg-  
 ment, and by the proper Use of such respective  
 Blessings.

If the Providence of God has planted us in a  
 fruitful Country, and his Goodness successively

SERM. crowns our Years with a perpetual Increase; we

V.



are then to express our Thankfulness by Temperance and Sobriety, by Charity and Works of Mercy to the Poor, by taking great Care to prevent Luxury and Debauchery, Pride and Vanity, Sloth and Forgetfulness of God; which are the Vices too apt to spring up out of Prosperity and Plenty. *When thou hast eaten, and art full, said Moses in his last and wise Exhortation to the Israelites; then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good Land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his Commandments, and his Judgments, and his Statutes, which I command thee this Day; lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly Houses, and dwelt therein;— and thy Silver and thy Gold,— and all that thou hast, is multiplied; then thine Heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, &c. Deut. viii. 10.*

Job xxxv.  
11.

If God has indued us with Learning and Wisdom, with Understanding and Knowledge, above other Nations of our Fellow-Creatures; whom we are too apt to despise under the Name of Barbarians; tyrannizing over their Weakness, and insulting over their Ignorance; not considering who it is that has taught any of us more than the Beasts of the Field, and made us wiser than the Fowls of Heaven: The proper Way wherein our Gratitude should show forth itself for these Things, is in applying Learning to the Advantage of Religion, and to the promoting of the Glory of

of God in the World ; by increasing *real Know-* SERM.  
ledge, and not perplexing it with *imaginary Sub-* V.  
tilities ; by discovering *Truth*, and not colouring  
over *Errors* ; by propagating what is *certain*,  
and not contending for *disputable Opinions*.

If God has vouchsafed us *the glorious Light of*  
*the Gospel*, and the *Knowledge of his Son our Sa-*  
*viour Jesus Christ* ; while many other Nations  
lie yet in the *Darkness of Heathenism*, and have  
not the *Knowledge of the Law of God* : The  
best and most acceptable Method of returning  
our Thanks for so inestimable a Blessing ; is,  
that we endeavour to propagate the *Christian*  
*Knowledge with Simplicity to Others* ; and that  
we take Care above all Things to obey the *Truth*  
*ourselves*, in the *Love* and in the *Purity* thereof.

If God has not only placed us under the *Light*  
of the *Gospel*, but blessed us also yet further  
with greater *Purity* of Religion, by a *Reforma-*  
*tion* from the *grossest Errors* and *Idolatrous Super-*  
*stitions*, wherewith even the *Christian World*  
itself had been almost universally overspread,  
thro' the *Corruption* of that *Mother of Har-*  
*lots and Abominations of the Earth*, which bath  
made all Nations to drink of the *Wine of her For-* Rev. xv  
*nication*, and in whom is found the *Blood of the* 5, 14. v  
*Prophets and Saints*, and of all that are slain upon 18, 24.  
*the Earth* : If God, I say, has blessed us with a  
*Reformation* from these grossest of *Corruptions* ;  
the most suitable Return of *Thankfulness* for  
such an *Advantage*, is to pursue the *Spirit* and



SER.M. *Design* of that Reformation; and to take great  
 V. Care, that we be not deluded insensibly to fall  
 back again, and *join in Affinity with the People of*  
 Ezra ix. *these Abominations*; but that we stedfastly take  
 14. more and more heed, without Regard to any

Mat.xxiii. *Human Authority* whatsoever, and without calling  
 9. *any Man Father or Master upon Earth*, to adhere  
 to the divine Authority of the *Scriptures* only,  
 as the Adequate Rule of Faith and Manners;  
 which is the sole Foundation of the *Protestant*  
*Religion*, and the only effectual Means of pre-  
 venting all *Differences* among those who sincere-  
 ly desire to understand and practise the Truth.

If God has preserved unto Us our *lawful Li-*  
*berties and Properties*, under a mild and well-  
 constituted Government; when almost all other  
 Nations upon Earth, are subject to arbitrary and  
 illegal Dominion; which is that Form of Go-  
 vernment, wherewith God threatned to punish  
 the *Israelites* for their Rebellion against him,  
 when he declared unto them by the Prophet Sa-  
 1 Sam. *mucl the Manner of the King that should reign over*  
 viii. 9. *them*: Our Thankfulness for the Continuance of  
 such a Blessing, can by no other Way be so pro-  
 perly expressed, as by making it our chief Care  
 to *use* that Liberty which we so justly boast of,  
 and which we have thought worth the defend-  
 ing almost with infinite Blood and Treasure,  
 so as not to *abuse* it to Licentiousness and Wan-  
 tonness: To *use* our Liberty so, as not to run in-  
 to the contrary Extreme of Lawlessness and Con-  
 fusion;

fusion; To use it so, as not to break through the SERM.  
Obligations of regular Government and legal Re- V.  
straints.

*Lastly*, If God has crowned all our other Blessings, with that which is the Security and Preservation of them all; a constant Series of unparallel'd *Success*, and *Victories* beyond Example great and complete, against the potentest Enemy that ever yet attempted to enslave the World; *What shall we render unto the Lord for these his Benefits*, and what Returns shall we make him for such a Blessing as this? The Answer to this Question, is of great Importance; and the serious Consideration of it, is that without which our religious Assemblies would be but mere Hypocrisy, and our Prayers no better than a mocking of God.

1st. Therefore, if we will make worthy Returns to God, for these his Benefits, in giving us such Victories and Success; we must in the first Place be careful to make ourselves truly sensible, from *what Hand* these Blessings do *really come*. We must be fully persuaded, that 'tis *God* that gives Victory in the Day of Battle, and that Success is owing to the Protection of the Almighty; that 'tis he that *breaketh the Bow, and knappeth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the Fire*. That which is apt to deceive Men in this Matter, is their observing Things to depend upon *Second Causes*, and to be brought about by the Operation of *Natural Agents*. But what are *Se-*

SERM. *cond Causes*, and what are *Natural Agents*, but  
 V. mere *Instruments* in the Hand of him who *rules*  
 over all? All other Things, excepting *Men* only,  
 who are free Agents, have no Pretence to be e-  
 steemed *Causes* in any Sense at all; but are meer-  
 ly as *Instruments* in the Hand of the Workman,  
 And by these Things, the Counsels and Designs  
 even of *Men* themselves, of the wisest Men and  
 of the strongest Forces, are perpetually over-rul-  
 ed to quite different Events, than they intended  
 or could possibly foresee. So that the Issues of  
 all great Actions, and the main Turns of all  
 worldly Affairs, depend entirely upon such Ac-  
 cidents, as are wholly in the Hand of God to di-  
 rect. Which Accidents, tho' they be indeed  
 what we vulgarly call *Natural Causes*, yet this is  
 really nothing else but an impropriety of Speech;  
 to call that a *Cause*, which, being Unintelligent,  
 is in Truth nothing more than an *Instrument* in  
 the Hand of him who is truly the efficient Cause.  
 And this is evidently the Case, in all Unintelli-  
 gent Natural Agents. Whatever *they* seem to  
 effect, is not in reality done by *them*, but by the  
*Providence of God*. That the Sun *runs* its Course  
*every Day*, is no less strictly and properly the  
 Hand of God, than that it *stood* still *one Day*:  
 Nor is there any other Ground, why the *one* is  
 by all Men readily ascribed to God, and *the o-*  
*ther* they vulgarly fancy is done naturally with-  
 out him; but only this one foolish Reason, that  
 what God does *once*, they see and acknowledge



is done by *him*; but what he does always, they therefore think 'tis not *he* does it *at all*. The Scripture, (and Reason also,) teaches us more justly, to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*; and to be sensible who it is, that, being the Author and Director of Nature, and of all those Accidents which we can neither foresee nor prevent, does thereby dispose and order, as he pleases, the Events of all Humane Affairs. *There are many Devices in Man's Heart; but the Counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*, Prov. xix. 21.

2dly. We must not only in a meer Speculative Manner, be convinced that 'tis the Hand of God which bringeth about all great Events, and crowns us with Victory and Success; but we must so consider it and meditate upon it in a *Practical* Manner, as to be truly thankful to him for the Advantages we reap thereby. The *Jews* in *Moses's* Time, *knew* very well *who* it was, that *made them ride on the high Places of the Earth, and—to suck Honey out of the Rock; and Oyl out of the flinty Rock*; who it was, that *led them in the Wilderness like Sheep, and kept them as the Apple of his Eye*; that *suffered no Man to do them wrong, but reprov'd even Kings for their Sake*. Yet even of these very Persons, who *knew* all these Things so perfectly, and had seen them with their own Eyes; did that holy Man complain, *Deut. xxxii. 15.* that *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked; that he forsook the God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation.*

SERM. King *Hezekiah*, knew very well who it was that  
 V. gave him a Sign, and recover'd him when he was  
 sick unto Death, and deliver'd him out of the  
 Hand of the King of *Babylon* by a Miracle: Yet  
 even of him, the Scripture complains, that he

2 Chron. rendered not again, according to the Benefit done un-  
 xxxii. 25. to him; for his Heart was lifted up; therefore there  
 was Wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusa-  
 lem. Even so we also, how well soever we ap-  
 prehend in a *Metaphysical and Speculative* Manner,  
 that God is the Disposer of the Events of all Hu-  
 mane Affairs; yet what are we the better, if it  
 does not affect us *Morally*, in filling our *Hearts*  
 with *Gratitude*, and our *Mouths* with *Praises*, and  
 our *Lives* with Acts of *Obedience* to him, after all  
 the great Things that he has done for us? This  
 is the only Return, that frail and dependent Crea-  
 tures are capable of making, to the supreme Lord

Job xxii. 2. and Governour of all Things. For our Goodness  
 extendeth not to him; neither can Man be profitable  
 unto God, as he that is wise, may be profitable unto  
 himself. But Thankful and Obedient to him, we  
 can be; and most inexcusable and base is our In-  
 gratitude, if his Mercies do not so affect us. Yet  
 most prone is our corrupt Nature, to become  
 thus forgetful of our supreme Benefactor: And  
 the very Frequency of great and unexpected Bles-  
 sings, is itself, to careless and profane Persons,  
 an Occasion of neglecting those Things as com-  
 mon, which, if they had more rarely happened,  
 would have been more carefully observed. In  
 the

the Course of this great and bloody War, almost SERM.  
*every Campaign* has offered as much Matter of V.  
 Thanksgiving, as at other Times the whole Se-  
 ries even of a successful War has been used to  
 furnish. And for this very Reason, because we  
 have been obliged to return Thanks *so often*, un-  
 thinking and careless Persons have little or no  
 Disposition to be truly thankful and devout *at all*.  
 The proper Remedy against this Evil, is to con-  
 sider seriously and distinctly, what it is that we  
 have hitherto been delivered from, by those Suc-  
 cesses, for which we have so often and with so  
 much Reason been commanded to return publick  
 Thanks. The War, wherein we are now en-  
 gaged, seems to be the last Struggle for the *two*  
*Things*, which alone are valuable in humane Life;  
*Liberty*, and *Religion*: In opposition to *arbitrary*  
*Power*, which destroys all Property; and in op-  
 position to *humane Authority and Infallibility sitting*  
*in the Seat of God*, which is totally inconsistent  
 with all true Religion. Had it pleased God to  
 permit our Enemies to have been as successful a-  
 gainst *Us*, as we have hitherto been victorious  
 over *them*; we had long since been Slaves, de-  
 prived of all legal Right to our temporal Posses-  
 sions; and, for our Religion, had been worship-  
 ing Stocks and Stones, and Souls of Men depart-  
 ed, instead of *Him that made the Heavens and the* Rev. xiv.  
*Earth and the Sea, and all Things that are therein.* 7.  
 Or, had Providence permitted us to have been  
 deluded, with the Pretences of a false and deceit-



SERM. *ful Peace*, the Effects of such an ill-grounded and  
 V. insecure Agreement, might possibly have been  
 much more fatal, than the continuance even of  
 the bloodiest and most expensive *War*. And the  
 growing Mischiefs of one disadvantageous *Trea-*  
*ty*, might have been more difficult to retrieve  
 than the transient Miseries even of many unprof-  
 perous and unsuccessful *Campaigns*. For we have  
 to deal with an Enemy, with whom no Peace is  
 to be had longer, than we have Power to inforce  
 it; An Enemy, whose Character is exactly given  
 by the Prophet *Daniel*, *ch. viii. v. 23. A King of*  
*fierce Countenance,—who shall destroy wonderfully;*  
*—and through his Policy also he shall cause Craft to*  
*prosper,—and he shall magnify himself in his Heart;*  
*and by Peace shall be destroy many.*

3dly. That our Thanksgiving may become  
 truly acceptable; it must be accompanied with  
 such *Circumstances*, and followed with such *Beha-*  
*viour*, as may show the *Words* of our *Mouths* to be  
 real Expressions of the *Thoughts* of our *Hearts*,  
 and that our Praises proceed not *out of feigned*  
*Lips*. Our Joy must express itself, not in Riot-  
 ing and Drunkenness, not in Frenzy and Debauchery;  
 but in Praises and Thanksgivings accom-  
 panied with Sobriety and Purity, with Modesty  
 and Humility; such as becomes those who mean  
 to honour God with Piety and sincere Devotion  
 in the Practice of that Religion, the Preservati-  
 on of which from being over-run with the Ty-  
 ranny and Superstition of Popery, is one of the  
 3 principal

principal Grounds of our rejoicing for that Success SERM.  
wherewith God has hitherto blessed us. For it V.  
becomes us *Christians* to rejoice, not in *Ravage*  
and *Bloodshed*, not in the *Misery* and *Destruction*  
even of our Enemies themselves: It becomes us  
to rejoice, not upon the Increase of our *Power*  
for *Dominion's* Sake; not upon the enlarging our  
*Territories*, and aggrandizing the *Honour* of our  
*Arms*; but in being enabled to rescue the op-  
press'd *Liberties* of Nations; to restore the com-  
mon *Rights* of humane Nature; and to secure  
that *Freedom of Religion*, in the denying of which  
consists the very Essence of *Antichristian* Iniquity.  
*All* Nations, after their Fashion, return their  
Thanks to the Almighty, for Victory and Suc-  
cess over their Enemies; and the greatest Tyrants  
and Oppressors of Mankind, pretend to Praise  
God, whenever their Arms, by the Permission  
of Providence, and for the Punishment of the  
World, prevail over the Weakness of their neigh-  
bouring Nations: But these their *Thanksgivings*  
are *Profaneness*; and to presume to offer Praises  
to God, for the Increase of *Power* for *Power's*  
Sake, and for the setting up *arbitrary* and *tyran-*  
*nical Dominion*, is no better than affronting of  
God, and making a Mockery of Religion. *Chris-*  
*tians* are to desire, and to rejoice at the obtain-  
ing such Victories only, as tend to establish the  
*Rights* and Properties of Mankind, and the com-  
mon *Liberties* of Nations: And our Joy must ex-  
press itself in such a Manner, and be attended  
with

SERM. with such consequent Behaviour as is becoming  
 V. the Purity of the Gospel of Christ. For, as the  
 Wisdom which is from above, so the Joy also of  
 James iii. those who are possess'd of that Wisdom, is, *first*  
 17. *pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated,*  
*full of Mercy and good Fruits.* It becomes us to  
 rejoice for Success in *War* for no other Reason,  
 but because 'tis the necessary and only Means of  
 arriving at a safe and secure *Peace*. With which  
 Blessing when it shall please God to complete  
 and crown all our past Successes; then will it  
 highly behove us to approve ourselves indeed the  
*Children of Peace*, by laying aside all those un-  
 christian *Divisions and Animosities* among ourselves,  
 which are kept up by the mutual Accusations, full  
 (as we reasonably hope) of more *Uncharitableness*  
 than *Truth*. The Means of causing all which to  
 be forgotten, is first to *unite* heartily in pursuing  
 the Things wherein we all agree; and then to  
 wait with *Charity* in those wherein we differ, 'till  
 even in *these* also God shall reveal the *Truth* unto us.  
 Let us consider, that *Force and Violence*, without  
 Regard to Right and Equity, are the Means by  
 which our *Adversaries* propagate their *Power*, and  
 (as they are pleased to call it) their *Religion* also:  
 For which Reason principally, their *Power* is a  
*publick Enemy* to Mankind, and their *Religion* pro-  
 perly *Antichristian*. But we profess to make *War*,  
 not for the Sake of *Conquest*, but only to obtain  
 to ourselves a secure *Peace*. And our *Religion*  
 teaches us, as to *desire* the *Publick*, so to *maintain*  
 as



(as far as possible) *private* Peace also among our-  
selves; by mutual Love, Charity and Good-will;  
as becomes those who profess the *Gospel of Peace*. SERM.  
V.

Let us therefore endeavour to *understand* right-  
ly, the full *Nature and Design* of the Religion we  
profess. Which consists mainly in these *two*  
Things. 1<sup>st</sup>, That the *Scripture* (as I before ob-  
served) is the *only Rule* of our *Faith*. Which, if  
duly attended to, would speedily put an End  
to all *Differences* and *Contentions*, among those  
who consider what they mean when they make  
*that Profession*. And, 2<sup>dly</sup>, That the *Command-  
ments of God* are infinitely of more Importance,  
than any *speculative Notions* or *Opinions* of Men.  
Which Thing, if seriously considered, would as  
effectually regulate our *Practice* in the Conduct  
of *Life*, as the adhering stedfastly to the only true  
Rule of *Faith*, would at once cut off all *Disputes*  
in the Matter of our *Belief*. Our *Lusts* and *Fol-  
lies*, our *Debauchery* and *Profaneness*, our unrea-  
sonable and unchristian *Uncharitableness* and *Divi-  
sions* among *ourselves*; are worse and more dan-  
gerous *Enemies*, than those we fight with *abroad*.  
And unless we speedily reform these Abuses, and  
cease to provoke God by the continued Corrup-  
tion of our Manners; the same Divine Provi-  
dence, which has hitherto wonderfully fought for  
us against the potentest Monarch that ever yet  
aim'd at the Empire of the World; can as easily,  
if he pleases, turn back our Successes speedily to  
our entire Destruction; and in a Moment bring  
upon

SERM. upon us, after all our Victories, the very same  
V. *Event* as would have been the Effect of a continually unsuccessful *War*; at the Time when we are just flattering ourselves with the Hopes of being put into secure Possession, of the Blessings of a safe and lasting *Peace*.

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*The Government of Passion.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Q U E E N,

At St. JAMES's Chapel, on *Sunday* the 7th of *January* 1710-11.

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*Publiſh'd by Her MAJESTY's Special Command.*

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EPHES. iv. 26.

*Be ye Angry, and Sin not.*

SINCE in the ordinary Conduct of humane Life, and in the *common Affairs* of the World, *Natural Wisdom* teaches us, that the only sure and effectual Means of avoiding *great Evils*, in the preventing of *small* ones; and that the *Beginnings* of Mischief are much more easily prevented, than the *Progress* of them stopped, or the *Consequences* of them remedied:

Since under the Improvements of *Philosophy* in the heathen World, the Principal and most useful

SERM.  
VI.  
~



SERMON. ful Precepts given Men for the Government of  
 VI. their Passions; was *to* watch continually, and  
 guard themselves against the *first Emotions* of  
 Passion rising up in Opposition to Reason; *to*  
 stop the first breaking out of a silent Stream,  
 which by Neglect would swell into an overflowing  
 Torrent; *to* extinguish the first Spark of a  
 scarce discernable Fire, which by Degrees would  
 prevail into a destroying Conflagration:

Since by the still purer and more refined Precepts of the *Doctrine of Christ*, we are obliged to govern even our very *Thoughts* and *Desires*; to pray against the *Temptations* and *first Occasions* of Sin; to lay the Axe to the Root of the Tree, by *suppressing* all corrupt *Affections*, by *restraining* all inordinate *Appetites*, by *moderating* and keeping even a strict Hand over *innocent Inclinations*; by *plucking out*, if Need be, even a *right Eye*, and *cutting off a right Hand*:

Since these Things (I say) are so; it may well seem strange, to any one that is not versed in the *Jewish* Manner of speaking, how St Paul should come to express himself after such a Sort, as if he intended to indulge Men in letting loose the Reins to their Passions, as far as was consistent with Innocency; and thought it safe to permit Men to allow themselves in the Gratification of their Anger, provided they did but just keep themselves without the Borders of Sin: *Be ye Angry, and Sin not*. As if the Bounds between what is excusable and criminal, were marked with

with so distinct a limit, that Men might be trust-  
ed to discern with Ease, *when* they were at the  
utmost Extent of their lawful Liberty; or that it  
could be supposed Men had so perfect a Com-  
mand of themselves, as to be able to stop sudden-  
ly at an appointed Mark in a swift Career, and  
say (when they please) to their Passion, *hitherto*  
*shalt thou go, and no further.*

SERM.  
VI.

Our Saviour, in his Divine Sermon upon the  
Mount, makes it in almost every Instance, his  
peculiar Improvement of moral Obligations un-  
der the Gospel, to warn Men against the Ap-  
proaches and Tendencies towards those Sins, whereof  
only the gross Acts were forbidden under the Law.  
*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old Time,*  
*thou shalt not commit Adultery: But I say unto you,*  
*that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her,*  
*has already committed Adultery with her in his Heart.*  
*Ye have heard it has been said by them of old, thou*  
*shalt not forswear thyself: But I say unto you, swear*  
*not at all. Ye have heard it has been said, an Eye*  
*for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth: But I say un-*  
*to you, that ye resist not Evil. Ye have heard it has*  
*been said, thou shalt not love thy neighbour, and hate*  
*thine Enemy: But I say unto you, love your Ene-*  
*mies. And in the Case before us, of Wrath and*  
*Anger: Ye have heard, says he, that it has been*  
*said by them of old Time, thou shalt not kill: But I say*  
*unto you, that whosoever is Angry with his Brother*  
*without a Cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment;*  
*—and whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in*  
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Mat. v. 27.

SERM. *danger of Hell-Fire.* Nay, in some of the antientest Copies of this Gospel, these Words of Restriction, (*without Cause,*) whosoever shall be Angry *without a Cause,* are omitted; and the Declaration is made in the most general Terms. *Whosoever is angry with his Brother, shall be in danger of the Judgment:* Men being apt enough of themselves, to put in such Restrictions as may be equitably presumed; and there being no need, in the Body of the Law itself, to express such excepted Cases or such Limitations, to which in all Reason and Equity, it may, however, be supposed the Law cannot extend. This makes it still the more worthy of enquiry, whence it might come to pass, that St. Paul expresses himself upon this Subject in such a Manner, as may seem to give some *Indulgence* to such Degrees of Passion as are not directly sinful; (*Be ye Angry, and sin not;*) when yet both by Experience and the Reason of Things, and by our Saviour's express Caution in all Matters of this Nature, 'tis evident that Passions indulged to the utmost Bounds of Innocency, are much harder to restrain from entering into sinful Degrees, than it was to prevent their Beginnings or arising at first.

Now the true Account of this Matter, seems plainly to be this. The Words, *Be ye Angry,* are not a Permission, as they may seem to be when taken alone; but, according to the Nature and Use of the *Jewish* Language, they are Part of a *Single* Proposition with those that follow. *Be ye*

*Angry*

*Angry, and Sin not; that is, Take heed and beware of sinful Anger. Indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin. Or, If at any Time ye be provoked, then take particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.* For such is the Idiom of the Jewish Language; to express that in two distinct Propositions, which ought so to be understood, as if they were put in one. There are many other Texts in Scripture, which will confirm this Interpretation; and the comparing them with this, will reciprocally afford much Light, towards the true Understanding of several of those Passages.

In the old Testament; *Mal. i. 2, 3. Jacob have I loved, saith God, and Esau have I hated.* The Propositions are not to be understood asunder, but to be taken together as one; *Jacob have I loved, more than Esau.* For God did not intend to express *Hatred* towards *Esau*, but only to love *Jacob* comparatively, with a great Love. *Nahum iii. 14. Fortify strong Holds, — there shall the Sword cut thee off:* The Intention is not to exhort *Nineveh* to fortify herself; but to declare, how much soever she does fortify herself, yet shall the Sword cut her off. And so *Isai. viii. 9. Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in Pieces,* i. e. How much soever ye strengthen yourselves, yet shall ye be broken. Again; *Ecclus. xxx. 9. Cocker thy Child, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he will bring thee to Heaviness:* The Proposition is but one; if thou indulge thy Child, he will bring thee to Sorrow. *Jer.*



SERM. vii. 22. *I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the Day that brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-Offerings or Sacrifices; but this Thing commanded I them, saying, obey my Voice:* The two Parts of this Sentence of the Prophet, are not to be taken separately, as if he affirmed that God did *not* require Burnt-Offerings *at all*; (for 'tis certain he *did* command them in most *express* Words, in the Law;) but the whole is to be understood together, that God did not *insist* upon Burnt-Offerings *so much*, as upon Obedience to the Commandments of the *Moral Law*. There is a like Expression, *Hos. vi. 6. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice*: The Meaning is not, that God did *not* require Sacrifice; but that he desired Mercy, *rather* than Sacrifice; and (as it follows in the very next Words) *the Knowledge of the Lord, more than Burnt-Offerings*. And thus also must be understood that Passage in *Ezekiel, Chap. xx. 25. I gave them also Statutes that were not good, and Judgments by which they should not live*: The Meaning is *not*, evil Statutes; God forbid: But Statutes which *comparatively* were not good; and Judgments which were not *so* profitable, as moral ones, to cause them to live.

In the *new* Testament, the same Manner of Expression, agreeable to the Nature of the *Jewish* Language, is likewise frequently used; and it is necessary to be taken Notice of, in order to the true understanding of several Passages.

am not sent, saith our Saviour himself, discoursing with the Woman of Canaan, but to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel; St. Mat. xv. 24. His Meaning is absolute, (as might seem from the first Part of the Sentence,) that he was not sent at all to any others than the Jews only; but that he was not sent so soon, so immediately, so principally; his Mission was not to be made known so early, to any other Nation, as the lost Sheep of the House of Israel. For that he was also, in process of Time, to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the Glory of his People Israel, the Scripture of the Prophets expressly enough declared; and our Saviour himself in this very Place sufficiently intimates, when immediately after this seeming Refusal, yet he effectually granted this Stranger's Request, by healing the Infirmary of her Daughter. And in his Instructions to his Disciples, chap. x. 5. he speaks with less Obscurity; *Go not into the Way of the Gentiles; — but go rather to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel.* Which was afterwards still more clearly expressed by the Apostles, Acts xiii. 46. *It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to the Jews; but afterwards to the Gentiles.* But, not to mention any other Places, there is one Expression of St. Paul, of this Nature, more remarkable to the present Purpose, than any other Passage in the whole Scripture. In the vi<sup>th</sup> Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, at the 17th Verse; *God be thanked*, saith he, *that ye*

SERM. were the Servants of Sin: But ye have obeyed from  
 VI. the Heart that Form of Doctrine, which was delivered you. God be thanked, that ye were the Servants of Sin: It may seem a very strange and unusual Expression according to the Manner of speaking in modern Languages: But in the Jewish Idiom it was very intelligible, that the two Parts of the Sentence should be taken as one; God be thanked, for that ye, who once were the Servants of Sin, have since obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.

And thus likewise in the Words of the Text; Be ye angry, and Sin not. That is, Take heed and beware of sinful Anger; indulge not Anger, lest ye fall into Sin; or, if at any Time ye be provoked, then take particular Care that ye fall not into Sin.

It is the same Caution, as in the Government of all other Passions or Desires. So use the World, as not abusing it; So rejoice, as though ye rejoiced not; So weep, as those that wept not; So be angry, as that ye Sin not. The Meaning of the Words, being thus explain'd: That which remains, is, 1<sup>st</sup>, that I endeavour, in a practical Manner, to represent unto you, what the Kind or Degree of that Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And, 2<sup>dly</sup>, that I briefly set before you some of the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies, of allowing our Passion to arise to such a sinful Degree.

Before I enter upon which Heads, it may be proper to premise two Things. 1<sup>st</sup>, That what shall

shall be said concerning the Nature of *Anger* in *SERMO*  
 particular, may with little Variation be easily *VI.*  
 applied in general to the Government of *all other*  
*Passions* whatsoever. So that though the pre-  
 sent Subject of my Discourse be *particular*, yet,  
 by serious Meditation, it may without Difficul-  
 ty be made *universally* useful, towards regulating  
 the Conduct of human Life. And, *2dly*, That  
 those Things which Scholastick Writers upon  
 this Subject, have made burdensome to the Me-  
 mory, and intricate to the Understanding, by  
 numerous Definitions, and more nice than neces-  
 sary Distinctions; I shall endeavour to reduce  
 under one single Head, that, what to Persons of  
 all *Capacities* is their Duty to *practise*, may, with-  
 out affording Matter for Dispute or Subtilty, be  
 by all Persons equally *understood*.

These Things being premised; I proceed  
*1st* to enquire, what the *Kind* or *Degree* of that  
 Anger is, which must be charged as Sinful. And  
 this will best be understood, by considering  
 briefly what the Nature and Use of our Passions  
 is, and for what Intent they were implanted in  
 us by our all-wise Creator.

Where *Reason* and Understanding are *perfect*;  
 there is no Room for any *Passion* or *Commotion*.  
 And therefore in the most perfect Being, there  
 is no *Passion*. In *God*, there is, properly speak-  
 ing, neither Anger nor Complacency, neither  
 Love nor Hatred, neither Joy nor Sorrow. In  
 Him, there is no such Thing as Desire or Avers-



SERMON. VI. *VI.* sion; no such Commotion as either Hope or Fear. But his Actions are determined always by perfect and unmixed Reason, by eternal and unchangeable Equity; which, in the supreme Mind, is an uninterrupted Calmness, like the Serenity of the highest Heavens. For, though the Scripture does indeed represent to *Us* the Divine Actions, as proceeding from Passions like to ours; yet this is *not* representing them what they are really in *him*, but only in Condescension to the Weakness of *our* Apprehensions, or with Regard to their Effects upon *Us*. And, as, in the same Scripture, *Hands* and *Feet* and *Eyes* are figuratively ascribed to him, who, in reality, without Shape or Figure is in all Places every where alike present; so by the like *Analogy* only it is, that to God are sometimes ascribed *Passions*, for which there is no Place in a Mind where Reason and Understanding are perfect.

On the contrary, where there is *no Reason* nor proper Understanding *at all*; as in Creatures inferior to *Us*; there, *Passions* and *Appetites* are the *only* Springs of Action; and by *them* are *irrational* Creatures naturally and unavoidably directed.

*Men*, who (like *Beasts*) are formed out of the *Dust of the Earth*, and yet (like *Angels*) made *after the Image of God*; are of a *middle* Nature between these two States, between perfect *Reason* and mere irrational *Appetites*: Being indued with

*Appetites and Passions*, to excite and stir them up to Action, where their bare abstract *Understanding* would leave them too *remiss*; and at the same Time indued with *Reason* also, to govern and *restrain* themselves, where *mere Appetites and Passions* would hurry them on to Things exorbitant and unreasonable. Herein therefore particularly lies the principal Duty of *Man*; in keeping his Passions subject to Reason, and in governing his Appetites by that Understanding, wherewith God has distinguished him from the inferior Creation.

SERM.  
VI.

The *Affections and Passions* are not in themselves *Evil*, (as some of the Antient Philosophers vainly imagined;) but were implanted in us by the wise Author of all Things, for excellent Ends and very useful Purposes: That we, whose mixt Nature of Body and Spirit, would otherwise have made us too *remiss*, in pursuing the Ends to which bare abstract Reason directed us; might by the Affections and Passions, under the Regulation of Reason, and subservient to it, *i. e.* by reasonable Fears and Hopes, by Love or Hatred, by Anger or Complacency, be pushed on and *excited* to be more earnest and vigorous, more constant and diligent in all those Actions of Life, which Reason *directs*, and the Affections *execute*.

But now, when the Passions, instead of *obeying* Reason, over-rule and govern it; when they prevail *against* Reason, so as to put Men upon doing Things which the Reason of their Minds

at

SERM. at the same Time forbids; or, (which is much  
 VI. the same Thing,) when they become so violent  
 as to abridge Men of their Liberty, and put  
 them *beside* their Reason; so as to leave them no  
 Room or Time to judge, whether the Thing  
 they are doing be reasonable or no; *then* it is,  
 that the Passions become truly Sinful. And  
*Man*, who when *Reason* governs him, is the  
 Image of *God*; degenerates by the Dominion of  
*Passion*, even below the Nature of a *Beast*. For  
 those inferior Creatures, when they obey their  
 Appetites, follow their *Nature*: But the Nature  
 of *Man*, is to obey a higher Principle, even  
*Reason* and the *Law of God*; to which, he who  
 is governed by *Passion*, is not subject, neither in-  
 deed can be; and therefore degenerates below  
 his proper Nature: Which is a Folly, whereof  
 inferior Beings are not Guilty.

From hence it becomes very evident, (which  
 was the *first* Thing proposed,) what the *Kind*  
 or *Degree* of that *Anger* is, which must be  
 charged as Sinful: Namely, that it is *then* such,  
 when it either puts Men *besides* the Use of their  
 Reason, or upon acting in any sort *contrary*  
 to it.

The Rule is *one*, and may without Difficulty  
 be understood by *all* Men; But the Application  
 is *infinite*, and must be made by *every one* for his  
 own *Particular*. Every Person knows, when he  
 considers seriously with himself; that his Anger  
 becomes *then* a sinful Passion, when it is stirred

S E R M.  
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up without just Cause, or upon any Cause vents itself in *undecent Effects*; when it spoils his Temper by *frequent Returns*; or by its *Violence* exposes him to *unseemly Transports*; or by \* its *Continuance* degenerates into Hatred and Malice, when its *Height* is disproportionate to the *Occasion* that raised it, or unbecoming the *Character* of the Person provoked; or the *Circumstances* be in any ways contrary to right Reason and Religion. Which Cases, though they are indeed *infinitely various*, and therefore cannot be expressed in any Methodical Direction; yet because the Rule (as was said) is but *one* and unchangeably the same, therefore the Application in Practice is always *Easy*: *Easy* (I mean) *to be understood*, that a Man is *then* always to look upon his Passion as *Sinful*, when it either puts him *beside* the Use of his Reason, or upon acting any Thing *contrary* to it: But not always so *Easy* to be *Practised*: Because habitual Passions, are very apt to surprise Men; and will not be prevented, but by a *constant Guard*. Yet, because 'tis a *necessary Duty*, so to prevent and guard against them; therefore in order to persuade Men to set about the Practice of what is so indispensable and of so great Importance, 'tis proper that I proceed now in the

II. *Second Place*, to consider some of the *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, of allowing our Pas-

\* *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*: The Words immediately following the Text.

sions



SER. M. sions to prevail, in any of the forementioned  
 VI. Kinds or Degrees.

And we cannot but take Notice, that even the *Heathen* Moralists themselves, have filled their Discourses with Arguments against irregular and disorderly Passions; drawn from the *Indecency* and *Unseemliness* of the *Thing itself*; from the *Shame* and *Indignity*, of a *reasonable Creature's* being subject to such *unreasonable Slavery*; from the *Uneasiness* of it, to *ourselves*; from the *Injuriousness* of it, to *Others*; and from many other Considerations, which prove a Man, who is govern'd by his Passion, to be incapable even of true *Philosophy*, incapable of coming up to so much as the moral Improvements even of a wise *Heathen*.

And the *Scripture* itself sometimes makes use of such *Natural Arguments*. From the *Folly* of the *Thing itself*, Eccles. vii. 9. *Be not hasty in thy Spirit to be Angry; For Anger resteth in the Bosom of Fools.* Prov. xii. 16. *A Fool's Wrath is presently known, but a prudent Man covereth Shame;* and chap. xiv. ver. 17, 29. *He that is slow to Wrath, is of great Understanding; but he that is soon Angry, dealeth Foolishly; and he that is hasty of Spirit, exalteth Folly.* Again, from the *Contempt* it draws upon Men, who are observed to be guilty of this Weakness; Prov. xxv. 28. *He that hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls.* From the frequent *Mischiefs* and *Damages* it brings upon

upon them; *Prov. xix. 19. A Man of great* SERM. VI.  
*Wrath, shall suffer Punishment; for if thou deliver*  
*him, yet thou must do it again: And Job v. 2.*  
*Wrath killeth the foolish Man, and Envy slayeth*  
*the silly one.* Also from the natural Excellency of  
 the contrary Practice; *Prov. xvi. 32. He that is*  
*slow to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he*  
*that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.*

But to us *Christians*, there are still higher Arguments to convince us of the Mischief of being governed by our Passions; and to persuade us of the Necessity, of restraining them within due Bounds. For *Us*, to indulge our Passions; is to deprive ourselves wholly of that Temper, that Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is the peculiar Character and Obligation of a *Christian*. If a *Philosopher*, if a *wise Heathen*, upon the common Principles of Reason and Morality; if a *Man*, upon the bare Consideration of the Dignity of his *Nature* above the Beasts that perish; is under Obligation to subdue his Appetites and Passions to Reason: How much more is a *Christian* bound, to keep himself still under stricter and more severe Restraints?

For when a *Christian* indulges his Passion, let him consider *who* it is, that acts so unworthily, and behaves himself so unseemly. A Man indued with *Reason* and Understanding: A Man, whose Reason is improved, not by *Philosophy* only, but moreover, by the Knowledge of the *revealed Will* of God: A Man, for whom

S E R M. *Christ* died; to whom *God* has been frequently reconciled, and, out of mere Mercy and undeserved Compassion, vouchsafed to turn away his Anger from him.

VI.

And against *whom* does this Person direct the Violence of his Passion? Against a *Man* like himself; against his *Friend* or his *Brother*, Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh; one for *whom* *Christ* died as well as for *himself*, and by his own Blood redeemed them *Both* from Death.

And *what* is it *for*, that one Christian Man is fiercely angry against another? Perhaps for a *careless Word*, or an *undesigned Provocation*, for a *difference in Opinion*; possibly for retaining a *good Conscience*, and not daring to do what the other expects of him; at most, for some slight and trivial *Offence*; for not being able to repay him his hundred *Pence*, when *God* has forgiven them both their ten thousand *Talents*.

Not that one Christian may not, in a just and legal Manner, *compel* another to do what is right and equitable: Much less that Superiors should not by their Authority *oblige* Inferiors, to perform the proper Duties of their respective Stations: But that in these, and all other Cases, *Religion and Equity* be the *Ground*; and *Reason*, not *Passion*, the *Measure* of the *Compulsion*.

If any Thing in the World could make exorbitant Passion excusable; it should seem to be when *Vice* is the Object of the Displeasure; and Concern for the *Honour of God*, the Cause

of



of the Commotion. Nevertheless, even in *this* SERM.  
 Case, our Saviour himself, when he was not on- VI.  
 ly reviled, but was reviled also with *Blasphemy*  
 against God himself; yet reviled not again. And  
*Michael the Archangel*, when contending with the  
*Devil*, yet did not bring against him a railing Ac-  
 cusation, but said, *the Lord rebuke thee*; Jude ix.  
 And the Scripture accordingly directs, that a  
*Servant of God* must not strive, but be gentle unto all  
 Men, apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing  
 them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will  
 give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the  
 Truth. For the Wisdom that is from above, is first  
 pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intrea-  
 ted, full of Mercy and good Fruits, St. Jam. iii.  
 17. And St Paul exhorts, Eph. iv. 31. Let all  
 Bitterness and Wrath and Anger and Clamor and E-  
 vil-speaking be put away from you, with all Malice;  
 and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted; for-  
 giving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has  
 forgiven you.

There is a remarkable History to this Purpose  
 in the Book of *Jonah*; where, upon God's re-  
 penting to execute his Threatenings upon *Nineveh*,  
*Jonah* was displeased at it exceedingly, and he was  
 very Angry; and persisted in it, that he did well  
 to be angry, even unto Death. But God reprov-  
 ed him by the Similitude of a Gourd, at which *Jo-*  
*nah* was grieved when it perished suddenly; and  
 the Lord said unto him, *Thou badst Pity on the*  
*Gourd, which came up in a Night, and perished in*



SERM. a Night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great  
VI. City?

When once a Man, whatever the Occasion be, gives himself up to his *Passion*; he is then *out* of the Use of his *Reason*, and he can never tell to what Degree of *Unreasonableness* he may be pusht on. *An angry Man stirreth up strife, and a furious Person will abound in transgression.* Prov. xxix. 22. As *Cain's* causeless Displeasure against his Brother, increased by Degrees beyond Limit, 'till it ended in Murder, so *Passion* let loose, even upon the most *just Provocation*, is like a Torrent breaking thro' a Bank; which will hardly be prevented from swelling 'till it leads us into Sin. *My Beloved*, saith St. *James*, *let every Man be—slow to Wrath; for the Wrath of Man*, (even though it be against what is *Evil*;) yet *worketh not the righteousness of God*.

The Cause of such disorderly Passions, is always *Carelesness* and want of *Seriousness*: The Remedy is, *Consideration*, *Attention*, and frequent *Examination* of a Man's self; so as to keep a constant Guard and Watchfulness over his Spirit. To be able *perfectly* to cure his Temper, to conquer himself *wholly*, and change his Disposition; is what no one ought to expect in *this World*; nor to be disappointed or discouraged, if he finds even the *moderating it* to be a Work of Difficulty and Time. But to *endeavour* to amend it *daily*, is his indispensable Duty. And he who considers how easily and suddenly he can restrain him-

self,

self, at the coming in of a *Superiour* whom he SERM.  
 reveres among *Men*; must not pretend it impos- VI.  
 sible for him to govern his *Passions*, with the  
 Thoughts of the perpetual Presence of *God*.

There have been some, who have alledged in  
 Excuse for themselves, that Passage in Scripture,  
 that the Apostles themselves were *Men of like*  
*Passions with us*. Acts xiv. 15. But the Intent of  
 that Passage is much misunderstood, through an  
 improper Translation. For the Intention of St.  
*Paul* and *Barnabas* speaking in that Manner to  
 the Men of *Lystra*, was not to say that they were  
 Men of *like Passions*, in the Sense we now usu-  
 ally understand the Word; but that they were  
 Men of *like Infirmities*, mortal Men like them-  
 selves, subject to *Diseases*, *Casualties* and *Death*;  
 and therefore, not to be worshipped as *Gods*. So  
*Jam. v. 17. Elias was a Man subject to like Pas-*  
*sions as we are:* The meaning is not, that he  
 was a *passionate*, but that he was a *mortal* Man  
 like one of us, and yet interceded effectually  
 with God. But if the meaning was literal, that  
 the Apostles and Prophets had the same *Passions*  
 with *Us*, (as undoubtedly they naturally had,) 117  
 yet this is no Excuse for *Us*, unless, like *them*,  
 we govern them also by the Rules of Reason and  
 Religion. *Be ye Angry, and Sin not. Now unto*  
*the only wise God, &c.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St *James's West-*  
*minster*, December 16, 1720. be-  
ing the Day of *Fasting* and *Hu-*  
*miliation*, for beseeching God to  
preserve us from the *Plague*.

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ISAIAH xxvi. 9. latter Part.

*When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the In-*  
*habitants of the World will learn Righteous-*  
*ness.*

SERM.  
VII.

**B**ESIDES the general Evidences of the Be-  
ing and Providence of God which appear  
in the Fabrick of the Universe, in the Contrivance and wise Disposition of all the Works of Nature, and in the great Providential Events which to the several Nations of the Earth declare in some Degree his Government over Mankind: I say, Besides these *general* Evidences of Providence, the Scripture has moreover given us a *particular* and standing Example of it, in the His-

tory of the *Jewish Nation*. *That People*, in a singular Manner, did God deliver out of the *Egyptian Bondage*, by Signs and Wonders and mighty Works. *Them* did he lead thro' the Wilderness like a Flock of Sheep, and with an out-stretched Arm brought them through innumerable Dangers to the Borders of his promised Land. Before *them* did he drive out many Potent People, and planted them in the room of those idolatrous Nations. Upon *them*, when they corrupted themselves and departed from his Ways, did he frequently inflict very severe Judgments, by Way of exemplary Correction, raising them up new Enemies round about them: And when they returned unto him again, he forgave their Misdeeds, and destroyed them not, but delivered them again out of the Hands of their Enemies. The *Effects* these various Dispensations of Providence had upon *particular Persons* among that People, were very different, according to the Temper and Dispositions of the Persons. Those of them, who were very corrupt; who loved the idolatrous Rites of the Nations that surrounded them, and the Debaucheries that attended those idolatrous Practices; became more and more corrupt in the Times of *Prosperity*, and in the Days of *Adversity* they hardened their Hearts against God. When the *Wrath of God* came upon *them*, and slew the wealthiest of *them*, and smote down the chosen Men that were in Israel: For all this they sinned yet more, and believed not his wondrous Works,



SERM. Pſal. lxxviii. 32. And when God worked for them  
 VII. miraculous *Deliverances*, ſtill *they kept not the Co-*  
 venant of God, and would not walk in his Law:  
*But forgot what he had done, and the wondrous*  
*Works that he had ſhew'd for them,* Ver. 12. The  
 mighty Signs and Wonders they continually ſaw,  
 grew familiar unto them; and by Degrees made  
*no more Impreſſion* upon them, than the Works of  
 Nature, which are indeed continual Miracles,  
 make now upon Atheiſtical and profane Minds.  
 But others amongſt them, *obſerved* the Works of  
 God, and the Diſpenſations of his Providence,  
 and laid up all theſe Things in their Minds; and  
 were influenced thereby to obey his Command-  
 ments, and to ſerve him with an upright Heart.  
 And ſome, who in the Days of Proſperity forgot  
 themſelves, and were carried away with the  
 Stream of a degenerate and corrupt World; yet,  
 when the Judgments of God appeared, their Heart  
*was tender*, and their Conſcience ſmote them, and  
 they returned and repented of their evil Ways,  
 and amended their Lives, and gave glory to God.  
 Ver. 5. *He bringeth down them that dwell on high;*  
*the lofty City he layeth it low, even to the Ground,*  
*he bringeth it even to the Duſt.—In the Way of thy*  
*Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the*  
*Deſire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Re-*  
*membrance of thee. With my Soul have I deſired*  
*thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me*  
*will I ſeek thee early. For when thy Judgments are*

*in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.* S E R M.  
VII.

The *Doctrinal Proposition* plainly contained in the Words, and which will therefore be the Subject of the following Discourse, is this: That the Design and the proper Effect of the Judgments of God in this World, is to awaken Sinners, and to bring them by Repentance to the Practice of Righteousness. *When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.*

*Righteousness* is the Practice of that which is in itself Right and Fit to be done. And, were there no Rewards or Punishments annexed either by God or Man, other than what essentially arise from the good or evil Actions themselves; yet that which is Right, would still always be reasonable to be done; and the Nature of Wickedness would be still always what it is. Upon this Ground it is, that *God*, who is infinitely above all Hope or Fear; to whose Happiness nothing can be added, and nothing diminished from it, yet essentially loves Righteousness and Truth, and steddily and unalterably chuses always to do what is Just and Good. *Inferiour* rational Beings, so far as they are influenced by *Reason*, do the same; and see, and esteem, and judge of Things; as they really are. But *all finite Beings* are, in their several Proportions and Degrees, *fallible*. And the Reason which is in *Men*, is Weak; liable to be darkened by *Ignorance*, to be blinded by

SERM. *Prejudices*, to be seduced by *Appetites*, to be over-ruled by *Passions* and unreasonable *Affections*.

VII. These are the Springs of Wickedness among Men. To prevent the ill Effects whereof God has been pleased to add *Weight* on the Side of Virtue and Righteousness, by the Sanction of *Rewards* and *Punishments*. The *Rewards* which God has annexed to the Practice of Virtue, either in this Life or the next, are of such a Nature; that the having *Regard to those Rewards*, does not destroy the intrinsic Excellency of Virtue, or make the Practice of it at all *mercenary*; because, the Idea of God being the Notion of a Being infinitely Holy, Righteous and Good; the Love of *him*, and the Desire of continuing in *his Favour* and of being *Blessed* by *him*, is either in effect the same Thing, or at least is coincident with, the Love of Virtue and Goodness itself. *Punishments* likewise, when considered as coming from God, are of such a Nature, that good Actions arising from the *Fear* of *his* Displeasure, do not lose the Nature of *true Virtue*; Because, God being infinitely removed from all possibility of Errour, Arbitrariness, or any evil Disposition whatsoever; Men cannot possibly by the Fear or Sense of *his* Anger, be excited or moved to do any Action, but what at the same Time they must of necessity be convinced in their own Minds, is Fit and Right and Reasonable for them to do. And Punishments inflicted by *Men*; were they always faithfully and righteously applied, that is, were they

they never, except in Cases of necessary *Self-Defence*, made use of to any other Purpose, than upon the Foundation of the acknowledged Difference between Good and Evil, to *compel* Men to do what they themselves well know is their *Duty* to do; were this (I say) constantly the Case, Punishment from *Men* would then be of the same Nature, and have proportionably the same Effect, as Punishment from the Hand of *Providence*. But the Errors and Passions of Mankind, having too frequently brought great Confusion into *their* Manner of dealing with each other; the right Use therefore and Application of Men's *Hopes* and *Fears* to the Purposes of Religion, is to turn them towards their most proper Object, the *Favour* or *Displeasure* of God. Now *Fear* being the *stronger* and more powerful Affection, than *Hope*; hence the *Judgments* of God, either *seen* or *felt*, either inflicted upon *ourselves*, or observed on *others*, are apt to work upon Men more effectually to bring them to Repentance, than the Observation of numerous Instances of the Divine Mercy and Goodness. In the Words immediately following my Text, and as a Confirmation of the Truth of the Proposition therein contained, that *When God's JUDGMENTS are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness*; In confirmation of this Truth, let *FAVOUR* (says the Prophet) *be shewn to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness; in the Land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty*



SERM. VII. *Majesty of the Lord: Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they SHALL see, and be ashamed: The Terrours of the Lord will force them to see, and they shall be ashamed. The Greatest of all the Temporal Terrours of the Lord, is Death: Death, which puts an End to all worldly Considerations, and consigns Men over to an unalterable Eternity. When this Messenger of the Divine Judicature apparently approaches; there is no Man so void of Sense, as not to begin then at least to be seriously solicitous, what the Event of that Judgment will be, to which he perceives himself going without Delay. The Reason why he should be thus solicitous, is the same at all other Times. For near or far off, still Death is equally certain; and after that, the Judgment. And how distant soever Death may at any Time seem to be from any particular Person, yet, even at that greatest seeming Distance, it must of Necessity be very near, it may be nearer than can be conceived. But Men are careless and stupid; and the Heat of Passions corrupts their Sense, the Deceitfulness of Riches blinds their Eyes, the Pleasures of Life steal from them their Understandings; and they willingly suffer the thinnest Mist to hide from them the clearest Light, and the meanest Trifle to divert them from the Thoughts of their eternal Interest. This is the Lethargy which in Time of Health and Prosperity, is apt to stifle the general Notices which God has given Men of himself in the*  
standing

standing Use both of Reason and Revelation. SERM.  
VII.  
To awaken Men therefore from this State of Insensibility, God is pleased *sometimes to strengthen* these *general* Notices, by more *particular* and more *immediately affecting* Warnings; by *Threatnings* of impending Judgments upon *ourselves*, or by *Examples* of his inflicting them upon *others*. By these, he excites Men's Consideration and Attention, quells the Eagerness of ungoverned Passions, and lays open to them the Folly of Ambition and Covetousness. By these, as 'tis elegantly express'd in the Book of *Job*, *ch. xxxiii.* 16. by These *he openeth the Ears of Men, and seal-eth their Instruction; That he may withdraw Man from his Purpose, and bide Pride from Man.* And, *ch. xxxvi.* 8. *If they be bound in Fetters, and held in Cords of Affliction; then God sheweth them their Work, and their Transgression, that they have exceeded: He openeth also their Ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from their Iniquity.* All temporal Judgments therefore whatsoever, are properly of a medicinal Nature, and mercifully intended for our Benefit: All of them without Exception, for the Benefit of such as shall take Warning from them in *others*; and all those of them which are short of Death, for the Benefit even of the *Persons themselves* on whom they fall. *It is good for me,* says the Psalmist, *that I have been Afflicted:* For, *before I was Afflicted, I went astray; but now I have learnt thy Precepts.* The gentle Admonitions of Afflictions sent upon *particular*

SERM. *ticular* Persons, are the *still Voice* of the divine  
 VII. Patience, calling Sinners to Repentance: And  
 ~~~~~ the severest Calamities even of *publick* and *national*  
 Desolations, Fire and Sword, Deaths and Fa-  
 mines, Plagues and Pestilences, are yet of the  
*same* Nature; being the *louder Calls*, and as it  
 were the *Thunder* of the Almighty's Threatnings,  
*necessary* sometimes, and even *these* not always  
 sufficient, to rowse up the Senses of a hard and  
 stupid, of a vicious and debauched World. 'Tis  
*no Pleasure* to the Almighty, to grieve the Chil-  
 dren of Men: And 'tis with the highest Elo-  
 quence of *affectionate* Expressions, that the Scrip-  
 ture constantly sets forth to us, how *unwilling* God  
 is to execute his severer Threatnings, how *ready*  
 always to remove his Judgments upon Men's  
 true Repentance, and how he *searches* as it were  
 for *every* Argument, and *every* Motive of Com-  
 passion: *Shall I not spare Niniveh, that great Ci-  
 ty, wherein are more than sixscore thousand Persons,  
 that know not their right Hand from their left?*  
 Nay, *shall I not spare Sodom*, does the Scripture  
 represent him saying within himself; shall I not  
 spare it for the sake of *ten Righteous*, if so many  
 can be found therein? But that the *severest* of  
 the divine Judgments, are sometimes *absolutely ne-  
 cessary*; and that the Corruption of the World,  
 were it to be always in a *continued* and *uninter-  
 rupted Prosperity*, would be *altogether Intolerable*;  
 is apparent from hence, that even *these Judgments*  
*themselves, seen* inflicted upon *others*, nay even  
 felt

felt inflicted upon Men's selves, even *These* very SERM. VII.  
 frequently prove *ineffectual*. How often, when  
 we see great Calamities befall our Neighbours;  
 instead of being warned thereby to amend our  
*own* Lives, do we turn it only into an Occasion  
 of Uncharitableness in censuring *others*! Which  
 Spirit, is very affectionately reprov'd by our Sa-  
 viour, *Luke xiii. 2. Suppose ye that these Galilæans,*  
*whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices,*  
*were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they*  
*suffered such Things? I tell you, nay; but except ye*  
*repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen,*  
*upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them;*  
*think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that*  
*dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye*  
*repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Nay, how fre-  
 quently do the severest of God's Judgments in-  
 flicted upon a Nation or People; the last and lou-  
 dest Call to Repentance, after which there re-  
 mains no Remedy against final Excision; how  
 often do *These* prove ineffectual, to awaken *even*  
*those very Persons* upon whom they are inflicted;  
 and leave them in an incorrigible impenitency,  
 hardened to Destruction! Thus of King *Abaz* we  
 find it recorded, *2 Chr. xxviii. 22. that in the*  
*Time of his Distress, he trespassed yet more against*  
*the Lord: This is that King Ahaz.* And of the  
 whole People of *Israel*, in a most eloquent Com-  
 plaint by the Prophet *Amos*, ch. iv. 6. *I have*  
*given you Want of Bread in all your Cities;—*  
*I have smitten you with Blasting and Mildew, when*  
*your*



**SERM.** *your Gardens and your Vine-yards the Palmer-worm*  
**VII.** *devoured; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the*  
*Lord. I have sent among you the Pestilence after*  
*the Manner of Egypt, and your young Men have I*  
*slain with the Sword, yet have ye not returned unto*  
*me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you,*  
*as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrha, and ye*  
*were as a Firebrand pluckt out of the Burning; yet*  
*have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. In*  
*like Manner in the new Testament, speaking of*  
*the Punishment of the Nations in the latter-days,*  
*which call themselves Christians; Rev. ix. 20, 21.*  
*The rest of the Men which were not killed by these*  
*Plagues, yet repented not---of their Murders, nor of*  
*their Sorceries, nor of their Fornications, nor of their*  
*Thefts: Of their Sorceries; that is, of all their*  
*superstitious Methods of making Men fancy*  
*themselves to be religious, by what others can do*  
*for or to them, or by what they can do for them-*  
*selves, without the Practice of Righteousness and*  
*true Virtue. And, ch. xvi. 9. Men were scorched*  
*with great Heat, and blasphemed the Name of God who*  
*hath Power over these Plagues; and they repented not,*  
*to give him Glory;---But blasphemed the God of Hea-*  
*ven, because of their Pains,--and repented not of their*  
*Deeds. In this Passage; (Men repented not, to give*  
*him Glory;)* 'tis worthy of Observation, by the  
 Way, wherein consists the true and Scripture-No-  
 tion of the Glory of God. It consists in reasonable  
 Creatures living, (under a due and constant Sense  
 of the Divine Government,) according to the Rules  
 of

Pharise-  
religion.

of Reason, of everlasting Righteousness, Goodness and Truth. And *Sinners* have no other possible Way of *giving Glory to God*, but by repenting of their evil Deeds; that is, amending their Lives, obeying *the everlasting Gospel*, and forsaking those Vices which are opposite to God's Kingdom of Virtue and Righteousness. Which Observation may be of good Use, for preventing many wrong Notions concerning the Nature of true Religion, and of the *Glory of God*. But to proceed. The *Reason why* the Judgments, the severest and most awakening Judgments of God, even those which cannot fail to convince Men of the Transitoriness, and Uncertainty, and Vanity of every Thing here below; do yet nevertheless very often prove *ineffectual* to cause *Sinners thus* to *give Glory to God*, by bringing them to true Repentance; the Reason (I say) why even *these* Judgments often fail of this Effect, is a confused, uncertain, inattentive sort of Infidelity; which, ascribing all Calamities to *second Causes*, and lamenting them only as unavoidable *natural Disasters*, looks not up to the Hand of the *first Cause*, which steers and directs the whole Course of Nature. *Wars and Desolations*, we see, arise from the Passions of Men. *Famines*, are owing to Accidents of Wind and Weather. *Plagues and Pestilences*, those great destroying Angels possibly are or however may be imagined to be, Vapours and Steams out of the Earth. And, because the Grounds of these Things appear in *Nature*; therefore

SERM. fore weak and foolish Men, intent upon the  
 VII. *Weapon* only, and not upon *him who strikes* with  
 it, regard not to give Glory to the God of Na-  
 ture. Whereas in Truth and Reality, *NATURE* is nothing but an empty Word; and  
 the *Course of Nature* (as 'tis vulgarly called,) ex-  
 cepting only the Operations of free Agents, is  
 merely an *abstract Notion* or Expression of the re-  
 gularity of *his* Operations, who made and go-  
 verns all Things. Even the Counsels and De-  
 signs of *Men*, are, by Incidents unforeseen to  
*them*, perpetually over-ruled to quite different E-  
 vents, than *they* intended or could possibly ima-  
 gine. But as to *UNINTELLIGENT Natural Causes*; whatever *they* seem to effect, is not  
 in reality done by *them* at all, but by the Provi-  
 dence of God. That the *Sun runs* its Course *every*  
*Day*, is no less strictly and properly the Hand of  
 God, than that it *stood still* one Day. Nor is there  
 any other Reason, why *supernatural Miracles* are  
 by all Men readily ascribed to God, when the e-  
 qually great *Miracles of Nature* are vulgarly fan-  
 cied to be done without him; for this (I say)  
 there is no other than this one foolish Reason,  
 that what God does *once*, Men see and acknow-  
 ledge is done by *him*; but what he does *always*,  
 they *therefore* think 'tis not *he* does it *at all*. The  
 Scripture (and Reason also) teaches us more just-  
 ly, to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*. That 'tis  
*he*, who causes *HIS Sun to rise*, and *sends us Rain*  
*and fruitful Seasons*. That 'tis *he*, who (in the  
 Psal-

Psalmist's Expression) maketh the Grass to grow SERM.  
 upon the Mountains; giving even to the BEAST VII.  
 his Food, and to the young Ravens which call upon  
 him. That, without him, not a Sparrow falls to  
 the Ground, but even the very Hairs of our Head  
 are all numbered. That 'tis he alone, who gives us  
 richly all Things to enjoy; even all those Things,  
 which, in a vulgar and careless Way of speaking,  
 we usually ascribe to natural and inanimate Causes.  
 Which very same Causes, whensoever he pleases,  
 he can make to be the Instruments of our Punish-  
 ment, as well as of our Support. He can (as  
 Moses elegantly expresses it;) make the Heavens  
 over our Heads, to be Brass; and the Earth under  
 our Feet, Iron. He can punish with the Pestilence  
 that walketh in Darkness, and with the Sick-  
 ness that destroyeth at the Noon-Day. He can  
 scorch with Drought, or drown with Moisture, or  
 blast with unwholsom Winds; in order to destroy  
 with Famine, and make a fruitful Land barren, for  
 the Wickedness of them that dwell therein. Or, with-  
 out removing the Blessings themselves of Nature,  
 he can at any Time withdraw the Benefit and the  
 Effects of them. When God with Rebukes doth  
 chasten Men for Sin, he maketh his Beauty to con-  
 sume away, as it were a Moth fretting a Garment,  
 Ps. xxxix, 11. So that, besides God's more visi-  
 ble Judgments upon a Nation or People, they  
 will sometimes by a secret Curse insensibly decay  
 in their Riches and their Strength. They will,  
 they know not how, be strangely impoverished  
in



SERMON. in the midst of Plenty, and weakened even by  
 VII. the greatest Successes; while they see not by  
 what Steps and imperceptible degrees (like *grey Hairs* and the Infirmities of old Age) Poverty and Weakness steal in upon them. By these various Methods, does the divine Patience awaken and call Men to Repentance. After which, if (in the Prophet's Expression) *the People turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither will they seek the Lord of Hosts: If, when thou hast stricken them, they have not grieved; when thou hast consumed them, they have refused to receive Correction, they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return: there then remains nothing, but that severest of all temporal Threatnings, Jer. ii. 19. Thine OWN WICKEDNESS shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee.* Thus did God deal with the antient Jews, Ps. lxxxii. 11. *My People would not bearken unto my Voice, and Israel would not obey me: So I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lusts, and let them follow their own Imaginations: And with the same People in our Saviour's Time, Matt. xxiii. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold, your House is left unto you desolate.*

It cannot be doubted but your Thoughts have already all along prevented me, in applying what  
 has

has been said *unto ourselves*, for whose *Admoni-* SERM.  
*tion these Things are written*, and they were in- VII.  
 tended for *Examples unto Us, upon whom the*

*Ends of the World are come.* There is no Nation upon Earth, that has had greater Experience of the divine Goodness, than *we* have had. We have long enjoyed the inestimable Blessing of a *free and legal Government*, while other Nations have groaned under the Violence of arbitrary Oppressions. We have had the free Use of our *Reason* and of the *Holy Scriptures* allowed us, which under other Governments, which yet call themselves *Christian*, have, for many Ages together, been persecuted even to Death. We have enjoyed all the Plenty and Happiness of *Peace*, even in the Midst of the most vigorous and bloody Wars: While the Sword and Fire have consumed round about us, and other fruitful Countries have been ravaged and destroyed: While *thousands have fallen beside us, and ten thousands at our right Hand*, and yet Providence has protected us, that *it came not nigh Us*: While Want and Famine spread Desolation among our Neighbours, and Pestilence at a Distance threatened still severer Judgments of God. What *Returns* we have made to the divine Goodness for these *Lengthenings of our Tranquillity*, appears too sadly in that Impiety and Profaneness, that Looseness and Debauchery, that Iniquity and Uncharitableness, that unrighteous and irreligious Spirit of Heat, Violence and Faction-  
 VOL. VIII. L ness,

SERMON. nels, which still abounds amongst us. For these

VII.

Things God has at several Times visited this Nation, with some sharp Remembrances of his Displeasure, and has at other Times threatned us with very near Approaches, of a more lasting and destructive Wrath. The Sword of his destroying Angel, is *at this Day* unsheathed before us; and how far his Commission may extend, God only knows. The *only certain Way* of deprecating God's Wrath effectually, is to bring forth beforehand those Fruits meet for Repentance, to which all the divine Judgments, that are not finally destructive, are intended to excite us. The *first Thing* is, that every *private* Person would for himself seriously examine, and amend (as Solomon expresses it, in that solemn Prayer of his, 1 Kings viii. 38.) *every Man the Plague of his own Heart*; that is, reform his *private and personal Faults*, whatever they be. In the *next Place*, with Regard to the *Publick*: Since God has been pleased to continue to us the Knowledge of the *Gospel*, in a more *free and unrestrained Use* of the *Scriptures* than most other Nations enjoy; it behoves us, (lest we provoke God to *remove our Candlestick* out of its Place,) to take due and constant Care that we bring every Thing impartially to the Test of that sacred Rule; and that in our Practice we continually so behave ourselves, as becomes those who have always before their Eyes the uncorrupted Doctrine and Precepts of Christ. And

since

since in the *Civil Government* likewise, it has hitherto pleased God, by many even miraculous Events, to continue to us our Laws and Liberties; it imports us, (as we would not draw down upon our Heads, that greatest of all the temporal Plagues of God, *arbitrary Power*;) it imports us, every Man in his Station, to the utmost of his Ability, to support and maintain a Government so constituted. That the *People*, under the uniform and steady Protection of wise and equitable Laws, may serve God quietly and with religious Fear. And that the *King* may rejoice in thy Strength, O Lord, and be exceeding glad of thy Salvation: That thou mayest give him his Heart's Desire, and not deny him the Request of his Lips: That thou mayest prevent him with the Blessings of Goodness, and make his Honour great in thy Salvation, and crown him with Glory and great Worship: That thou mayest give him a long Life here, and a longer and happier hereafter, even for ever and ever.

SERM.  
VII.



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. James's West-  
minster, Decemb. 8, 1721. being  
the Day of Fasting and Humilia-  
tion, for beseeching God to pre-  
serve us from the Plague.

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LUKE xiii. 2, 3.

*And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose  
ye that these Galilæans were Sinners above  
all the Galilæans, because they suffered such  
Things? I tell you, nay, but except ye re-  
pent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

SERM.  
VIII.

**T**IS the natural Voice and Judgment of  
Reason, in which all Men who have any  
Sense of God upon their Mind; in all Nations  
and in all Ages, have agreed; that the Miseries  
and Calamities which befall Mankind, are all of  
them the *Effects* and *Consequences* of Sin. Con-  
sidering the essential Goodness of God, who  
cannot take Pleasure in the needless Afflictions  
of his Creatures; this Notion, in general, can-

not but be right. And, were there no other S E R M. State but this; were this World the Whole of V I I I. God's Creation, and took in the whole Period of our Being; it could not but be moreover true *in particular*, that the *Proportion* of Misery which befalls every single Person, would be exactly correspondent to his Crimes. But *here*, there comes in a very great Variety of *different* Considerations. The present State being a Time of *Trial*, and not of *Retribution*; there hence arise many wise Reasons, why God sometimes permits the greatest of Afflictions to fall upon the best of Men, and sometimes suffers the wickedest of Men to go on in an uninterrupted Course of Prosperity; and, in the Execution of temporal Judgments, very frequently involves the Righteous in the same Calamities which he sends upon the Ungodly. The only Use therefore that *can* be made, and which Providence intends should be made, of the divine Judgments here upon Earth; is to convince us of the Evil of Sin in general, to awaken us from a careless and inconsiderate Temper, to wean us from too great a Fondness for the uncertain Injoyments of this present Life; and to put us continually upon mending *our own* Manners, and improving *ourselves* more and more in the Practice of Virtue; and not at all to enable us to judge concerning *others*, before the great Day of Account, what *their* State and Condition is, with Regard to the final Favour or Displeasure of God. This is a  
L 3 Matter

S E R M. Matter of Curiosity, which concerns not *us* to  
 VIII. know; and every Judgment we attempt to  
 make concerning it, has, in the present State  
 of Things, even a proper and natural Tendency  
 to deceive us. Every *private* Person, in this  
 Way of judging, whenever he compares himself  
 with others; 'tis odds but, according as his na-  
 tural Temper be, whether Melancholy, or Pre-  
 sumptuous; he determines either *uncharitably* of  
*others*, or with unreasonable *Despondency* of *him-*  
*self*; from Dispensations of Providence, which  
 neither to *him* nor *them* are at all the proper Rule  
 of judging in that Matter. But *publick* Bodies  
 of Men; Nations, Sects, or Parties: whenever  
*they* take upon them to judge each other in this  
 Method, they hardly ever fail to err on the *pre-*  
*sumptuous* Side; and to turn every Judgment of  
 God, which falls upon Men of *other* Denomina-  
 tions, into an Argument of Pride and Favour  
 towards *themselves*. This is what our Saviour,  
 in the Text, warns us against, *Suppose ye*, says  
 he, *that those* Galilæans, who fell by *Pilate's*  
 Cruelty in so extraordinary a Manner, as that  
 their *own Blood* was mingled with the Blood of  
*their Sacrifices*; suppose ye that these Men *were*  
*Sinners above all the* Galilæans, *because they suffer-*  
*ed such Things*? I tell you, nay, but except ye re-  
 pent, ye shall all likewise perish. The Persons  
 who told our Lord of this extraordinary Cala-  
 mity, ver. 1. seem to have done it with an Ex-  
 pectation of Curiosity, to see what Observations

our Lord would make concerning the Behaviour and Circumstances and State of those Men towards God, upon whom this particular Misfortune fell. But he in *this*, according to his constant Method in all other Cases, disappointed their unprofitable Inquisitiveness; and, instead of satisfying them about *other* Men's Affairs, turns their Question into an Occasion of making some useful Application to *themselves*: *I tell you,* says he, *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

In discoursing upon which Words, it may be useful for us to observe: *1st.* Our Saviour's *general* Manner; that, whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related to him any particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some *practical* Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. And, *2dly.* The *particular* Doctrine contained in these Words: That, though all God's temporal Judgments are inflicted upon account of Sin, yet they are not proportionable to the Degrees of Men's Demerits; and that therefore the proper Use to be made of them, is, never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning *others*, but to infer *for ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance.

*1st.* Nothing is more remarkable in the whole History of the Gospel, than our Saviour's *general* Method:



SERM. Method: That, whenever Men proposed to  
 VIII. him any curious Question, or related to him any  
 particular Fact or Event, in Expectation of hearing his Observations upon it; he constantly turned the Matter before him, into an Occasion of giving some *practical* Instruction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom he was conversing. He passes no Judgment upon those unhappy *Galileans*, whose extraordinary Misfortune was now reported to him. He makes no Observation upon the Characters of the Persons, nor gives any Hint of the peculiar Reasons for which Providence thus distinguished them from the Bulk of Sinners. But (what was of much more Use to the Persons who made the Enquiry, and to all Christians in general, for whose Instruction our Lord's Reply is recorded in the Gospel;) he hence takes Occasion to inculcate upon *all* Sinners, the Necessity of Repentance and Amendment of Life, in order to escape God's final Wrath. And this was his constant Method, upon all *other* Occasions. When one asked him, *ver. 23. of this Chapter, Lord, are there Few to be saved?* instead of satisfying the Person's Curiosity, he exhorts both him that asks the Question, and as many others as were present, to take Care that *they themselves* be found in the Number, *whatever* that Number be. *Strive ye to enter in at the strait Gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the House is risen up, and*  
*batb*

bath shut to the Door, and ye begin to stand without, **SERM.**  
 and to say, Lord, — we have eaten and drunk in thy **VIII.**  
 Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets; he  
 shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are;  
 depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity. Again:  
 When his Disciples asked him, *Matt. xviii. 1.*

*Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?* Instead of naming, according to their Expectation, some among themselves, who had conversed with him most intimately here upon Earth; (which Expectation showed forth itself particularly in the Request of the Mother of Zebedee's Children, that one of her Sons might sit on his right Hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom :) Instead of this, I say, he tells them which was the only Way whereby they could attain to the Kingdom of Heaven at all. Setting a little Child in the Midst of them, he said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. In like Manner, when the Disciples asked him, *Matt. xxiv. 3.* *When shall these Things be? And what shall be the Sign of thy coming, and of the End of the World?* the Sum of his Answer is: Watch ye, and be ye ready; for in such *ver. 42, 44.*  
 an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.

And, take heed to yourselves, lest at any Time your *Luke xxi.*  
 Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life; and so that Day  
 come

SERM. come upon you unawares. For as a Snare shall it

VIII. come on all them that dwell on the Face of the whole

Earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things, and to stand before the Son of Man. And the same Turn that he thus always gave to curious Questions put to him, the same he likewise constantly gave to incidental Things said to him, or to particular Facts and Events taken Notice of in his Presence. When one prefaced a Question he was about to propose to him, with that respectful Title and Mark of Esteem, *Good Master*, he thence takes Occasion, even from so seemingly small a Handle, to instruct the Person in that great and prime Foundation of all Religion, that *God and God only*, is perfectly and essentially good. *Why callest thou me, good? There is none good, but one; that is, God.* Again, when *Martha* cumbered with much serving, complained to him, *Lord, dost thou not care that my Sister hath left me to serve alone?* instead of speaking to her Sister to come and help her, he takes a gentle Occasion from her own Complaint, to remind her of a more important Piece of Service: *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many Things; but one Thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good Part, which shall not be taken from her.* At another Time, when one of the Company he was discoursing to, desired him to speak to his Brother to divide the Inheritance with him; instead of making himself a Judge and Divider between them, he

Mat. xix.  
17.

Luke x.  
40, 42.

he chose rather to take that Occasion to preach S E R M.  
VIII.  
to them all against Covetousness: *Take heed and  
beware of Covetousness; for a Man's Life consisteth  
not in the Abundance of the Things which he pos-  
sesses.* Luke xii.  
15.

In another Place, when a Person in the Company to whom he was preaching, astonished at the Excellency of his Doctrine, cried out, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked,* Luke xi. 27. immediately he turns their Thoughts from the Admiration of *himself*, to that which would most effectually be profitable to *them*: *Yea rather,* says he, *Blessed are they that bear the Word of God and keep it.* Upon another Occasion, when his Disciples prayed him to eat, John iv. 31. He lets not even that Opportunity slip, of reminding them how, to a rational and well-disposed Mind, there is no Pleasure so great, as that of doing what is right: *I have Meat,* says he, *to eat, that ye know not of;—My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* 'Twould be repeating the *whole* Gospel, the *whole* History of our Saviour's Life; to mention *all* the Instances of his turning *every* Incident that came before him, into Matter of Instruction and Admonition to those with whom he conversed. When some of the Pharisees advised him to *retire* out of the Reach of *Herod*, who, they informed him, had a Design to kill him, Luke xiii. 31. Instead of being drawn, as probably *they* expected, by that seeming friendly and officious Advice, to enter  
with



SERM. with them into the *Character* of Herod and his  
 VIII. Government; he, in a very *extraordinary* and  
 yet most *natural* Manner turns his Answer into a  
*severe Reproof* of *their own* Incurribleness, and  
 into an Occasion of giving them *Warning*, how  
 near the *final Wrath* of God was impending upon  
 them: *It cannot be*, says he, *that a Prophet perish*  
*out of Jerusalem*: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
 which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are  
 sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered  
 thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her  
 Brood under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold,  
 your House is left unto you desolate. In like Man-  
 ner, when his Disciples, as they were going out  
 of the Temple, observed to him, Master, see  
 what Manner of Stones, and what Buildings are  
 here, Mark xiii. 1. Instead of adding, as they  
 seemed to expect, *his own* Observations concern-  
 ing the *Sumptuousness* and *Magnificence* of the  
 Building, and the *Grandeur* and *Riches* of the  
 Builder; he on the contrary turns his Thoughts  
 from *these* Considerations, to the View of that  
*final Destruction* which God intended to bring  
 upon the whole Nation, for their continued Per-  
 verseness and Disobedience: *Seest thou* (says he  
 to the Person who desired him to take Notice of  
 the Stateliness of the Fabrick; *Seest thou*) *these*  
*great Buildings*? *There shall not be left one Stone*  
*upon another, that shall not be thrown down*. And  
 thus likewise, in the Words of the Text: *When*  
 some

*some that were present, told him of the Galilæans, whose Blood Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices; he did not, (as they, who mentioned this Matter to him, seemed to expect; he did not) hereupon enter into a Discourse concerning either the Cruelty of Pilate who murdered these Galilæans, or his Impiety and Profaneness in murdering them at the Place and Time of God's publick Worship, or concerning the unhappiness of the Persons themselves who perished by so particular a Misfortune, or concerning the peculiar Reasons why the divine Providence thought fit to distinguish these particular Persons by a singular Judgment: But, instead of all this, he immediately makes the Application to his Auditors then present, and to the Persons themselves who told him of the Fact; warning them of the indispensable Necessity of effectual Repentance and Amendment of Life as the only possible Means by which they themselves could escape God's final Vengeance. Suppose ye, (says he) that these Galilæans were Sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or these eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt at Jerusalem? I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

2dly. Having thus at large set forth to you our Saviour's general Method; that whenever Men proposed to him any curious Question, or related

SERM. related to him any particular Fact or Event, in  
 VIII. Expectation of hearing his Observations upon  
 it; he constantly turned the Matter before him,  
 into an Occasion of giving some practical In-  
 struction, to the Persons *themselves* with whom  
 he was conversing: It remains now in the *second*  
 Place, that I proceed to consider the *particular*  
 Doctrine, expressed in the Words of the Text;  
 that, though all God's temporal Judgments are  
 inflicted upon Account of Sin, yet they are not  
 proportionable to the Degrees of Men's Demerits;  
 and that, therefore, the proper Use to be made of  
 them, is never from thence to form any uncharit-  
 able Judgment concerning *others*, but to infer for  
*ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance. That all  
 the temporal Judgments God at any Time in-  
 flicts upon Mankind, are on the Account of *Sin*,  
 cannot indeed possibly be denied; because 'tis  
 on the Account of *Sin*, that Men are at all placed  
 in this State of *Misery* and *Mortality*. Had  
*Sin* never entered into the World, Man had ne-  
 ver been excluded out of *Paradise*, and from the  
*Tree of Life*; which was, either literally or figu-  
 ratively, a Means or an Emblem of Immorta-  
 lity and Happiness. And at last, when *Trans-*  
*gression shall be finished*, and, *an End made of Sin*;  
 the *Fruit of the Tree of Life* (as the Prophetick  
 Language expresses it) shall be again restored,  
 and the *Leaves of the Tree* shall be for the *Heal-*  
*ing of the Nations*. To *Sin* therefore, in general,  
 'tis evident, all the Miseries of this mortal State  
 are

are wholly owing. Nevertheless, since this present State is not a State of *Retribution* in particular, but only such a State of *Tryal* or *Probation*, as God, in consequence of Sin's entering into the World, thought fit to appoint Men to undergo; a State, in which the Righteous and the Wicked, without a perpetual miraculous Interposition, cannot but be frequently involved in the same Calamities together; a State, in which the best and most innocent Persons very often suffer, even the *most grievously*, by and from the Wicked; a State, wherein God himself sometimes thinks fit, by Afflictions of his own more immediate appointing, (by Winds and Storms, by Floods and general Devastations, by Famines, Pestilences, and the like universal Calamities, which fall upon all promiscuously,) to try the Faith and Patience and Resignation of his Servants; and in which State we can never judge with any Certainty, whether even those who are the most suddenly cut off, are cut off in Judgment or in Mercy: For these Reasons, whenever we see any extraordinary Calamity befall any particular *Person*, or any Body of Men, or any one *Nation* in particular; we ought never from thence to form any uncharitable Judgment concerning the State of *others* with Regard to God, but only to infer for *ourselves* the Necessity of Repentance. 'Tis a very natural Piece of Pride, in careless and corrupt Minds, to build an Opinion of their *own* Goodness, up-

on



SERM. on the comparative Badness of *others*; and in  
 VIII. *judging* of this comparative Badness of *others*, to  
 deceive themselves, by founding that Judgment  
 either upon *what others suffer* at the Hand of  
 God, or perhaps upon *what Faults others are*  
*guilty of* in one particular Manner, when possibly  
*they themselves* are in some other Manner guilty of  
 the very same Offences. Thus for Instance,  
 Christians of the reformed Religion condemn, and  
 very justly, those of the Church of Rome, as  
 guilty of the highest Absurdity and Irreligion,  
 who in a continual Circle look upon themselves  
 as absolved from their Sins, which they *confess*  
 to a Priest, and then *return* to their Sins again:  
 And yet among Protestants every one is really  
 guilty of the very same Absurdity and Irreligion,  
 who in a continual Circle looks upon him-  
 self as absolved from his Sins, which he *confesses*  
 to God Almighty, and then *returns* to them again.  
 Thus Men are very apt to deceive themselves,  
 in comparing other Men's *Actions* with their own.  
 And so they are apt to do also, in comparing  
 their *Sufferings*. A false and deceitful Heart,  
 (especially in Cases where *Bodies* of Men, where  
*Nations* or *Seets* or *Parties* are concerned,) is very  
 ready to flatter itself with Imaginations of being  
*itself more in Favour* with God, when the severer  
 sorts of the *divine Judgments* inflicted upon  
*others*, fill it with uncharitable Suspicions of the  
*Grounds and Reasons* of those Judgments. In  
 some few particular Cases indeed, where the

Judg-

*Judgment* is the immediate *Consequence* and direct *Effect* of the *Sin*; as where the *Diseases* are the immediate *Produce* of the *Debauchery*; or where either *single Persons* or *whole Nations* do *themselves* greatly *suffer*, in the *very Attempt* of despoiling *others* of their manifest *Right*: In these Cases there is indeed no Uncharitableness, in ascribing the *Judgment* to the *Sin*. But much oftner, and indeed *generally speaking*, it arises wholly from Men's *Partiality* towards *themselves*, that they are so ready to throw upon *others* the Causes of the Judgments wherewith God punishes Mankind. Thus of old in the *Heathen Roman Empire*, whenever God was pleased to send among them Plagues or Famines, or Devastations by the Incurfion of barbarous Nations; the *Christians* immediately, as if *they* were the Causes of the Calamity, were hurried to the Prisons, to the Racks, and to the wild Beasts. 'Tis not easy for Men to see it in *themselves*: But *something* of the *same Spirit* there is in *every wicked Man*, when, instead of being moved by the Judgments of God to examine and amend his *own Heart*, his Eyes are continually searching after the *real* or *imaginary* Faults of *others*. *Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth*. But if we would observe our Saviour's Direction in the Text, and form our Notions of Things according to *that Rule*; *herein* we could *never be deceived*. The Judgments of God, which we see

S E R M.  
VIII.

SERM. abroad in the World, are a *proper* and *continual*  
 VIII. *Warning to all Sinners, to bring them to Repen-*  
*tance and effectual Amendment: Without which,*  
 they must *all* finally and inevitably perish. The  
*Jews*, to whom our Saviour gave the Admoni-  
 tion in the Text, did, at the Destruction of *Je-*  
*rusalem*, perish in great Multitudes *literally* by  
 the *very same* Calamity, which had before fallen  
 upon the *Galileans* here mentioned. And *all*  
*Sinners* in *all Ages*, who see the Judgments of  
 God fall upon *others*, ought to consider, that they  
 know not how soon the *very same* Calamities  
 may fall upon *themselves*. But whether the Pu-  
 nishment overtakes them at all *here*; or no; it  
 will, without timely and effectual Amendment,  
 certainly overtake them *hereafter*. Which is a  
*much more terrible* Consideration: For *if these*  
*Things are done in the green Tree, what shall be*  
*done in the dry?* If Judgment begin at the House of  
 God, what shall the End be of them that obey not  
 the Gospel? If the temporal Calamities which fall  
 upon mixt Multitudes *here*, of the Righteous and  
 Wicked together, be so dreadful; what shall  
 the Estate be of *those*, who shall be punished with  
 EVERLASTING Destruction from the Presence  
 of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Majesty?

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

Parish-Church of St. *James's Westminster*, *Apr.* 25. 1723. being the Day appointed by his Majesty for a publick *Thanksgiving* to God for preserving his Majesty and his Subjects from that dreadful *Plague* with which the Kingdom of *France* was lately visited; and for putting an End to the same.

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MATT. xxiv. 7.

*For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom: And there shall be Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places.*

THESE Words are Part of the propheticall Description, which our Saviour gives his Disciples a little before his Death, of the

SERM.  
IX.



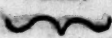
S E R M. State of Things which should be between that  
 IX. Time and the final Destruction of the Jewish  
 Temple and Nation; and, under that Type, the  
 State of the World in general during the larger  
 Period, until his coming to Judgment. The *prin-*  
*cipal* Thing, about which he most *distinctly and*  
*particularly* admonishes them, is the *Persecutions*  
*and Difficulties* they and their Followers must  
 expect to meet with, more or less, in all Ages.  
*They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall*  
*kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my*  
*Name's-Sake: And many shall be offended, and shall*  
*betray one another, and shall hate one another: And*  
*because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many*  
*shall wax cold:* That is, the general Corruption  
 and Wickedness of the World, shall *discourage*  
 many, and weary them out, and make them lay  
 aside all Thoughts of Religion, and give them-  
 selves up to be carried with the Stream of an un-  
 righteous and debauched World. For there  
*shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the*  
*Beginning of the World unto this Time, no, nor*  
*ever shall be. And except those Days should be*  
*shortened, there should no Flesh be saved:* (That is,  
 the Truth of Religion, if the State of Things  
 were long to continue, would be *totally extin-*  
*guished* among Men, by the Universality of pre-  
 vailing Corruptions: (But, for the *Elect's* sake,  
*those Days shall be shortened.* This (I say) is the  
*principal* particular, upon which our Lord here  
 chiefly enlarges: That in after Ages, Men might

not be surprized, when they should find that the *Prince of Peace* came not to send Peace upon Earth, *but a Sword*; and that the Religion of Christ, a Religion of the most perfect Simplicity and Plainness, of the completest and most extensive Charity, should be over-run with universal Confusions and Iniquity. But *besides* this principal and more *especial* Aim of his Discourse, he intermixes moreover some general *Intimations* of other Events which should happen in the World; and particularly of the *Judgments*, wherewith the divine Providence would from Time to Time punish the unrighteous Nations of the Earth. *Ye shall bear* (says he) *of Wars and Rumors of Wars: See that ye be not troubled: For all these Things must come to pass: For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there shall be Famine, and Pestilences, and Earth-quakes in divers Places: All these are the Beginnings of Sorrows.*

With Regard to *each* of these Particulars, *viz.* the *Persecutions* wherewith *good Men* should be oppressed by an *unrighteous World*, and the *Judgments* wherewith the *divine Providence* should at any Time punish the *Nations of the Earth*; the Advice our Lord gives his Disciples, is, to *PRAY* constantly to God, that he would be pleased either to *prevent* these Things coming upon them, or *lighten* the Burden of them by providential Supports. *Pray ye*, says he, *that your Flight be not in the Winter, neither on the*

SERMON. Sabbath day. And, watch ye therefore, and pray

IX. always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape

 all these Things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. Now the same Reason that there is, why we ought at any Time to PRAY, that God would either prevent or remove from us any Calamity; the very same Reason there is, to return him our THANKS and PRAISE, whenever he has been pleased either to withdraw from us any such Calamity, or the apparent Danger of it. The Ground of both, is the same; that God, who has Power over all, is the alone Disposer of all Events; and that that Disposition of Mind, which leads Men to apply to him for all the good Things they want, and to make Acknowledgment to him for all the Benefits they have received, is one of the principal of those Qualifications which recommend Men to the Divine Favour, and to the more immediate Care and Protection of his good Providence. The Meaning of which is, that not even the best of Men can have any certain Security that they shall escape the Calamities of this present Life; nay, in some Cases, as in that of Persecution particularly, they are for that very Reason the most exposed, because they are the best Men: But the Meaning is, that God who created the material World for the Sake of the moral One, and governs the former always with a View to the latter; (for the unintelligent material World, how exquisite soever the Fabrick

rick

rick of it be, is *nothing at all* any otherwise, than S E R M.  
IX.  
as it has Relation to *Intelligent and Rational Be-*  
ings that inhabit it:) God, I say, who *created*  
the *material* World merely for the Sake of the  
*moral* one, and *governs* the former always with a  
View to the latter, will certainly make *all Things*  
(sooner or later) *work together for good to them*  
*that love him*, Rom. viii. 28. Even the *severest*  
*Judgments* that he ever sends upon the World,  
and which to *incorrigible Sinners* are the Messen-  
gers of *Destruction*; even *these*, to well-disposed  
Minds, are either at a Distance *Warnings* and  
*Admonitions* to amend: Or they are *Chastisements*  
inflicted for their *Correction*; which, though at  
present they cannot but be *grievous*, yet *after-*  
*wards they yield the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness*  
*unto them which are exercised thereby*: Or they are  
*Trials of Men's Faith and Patience*; which being  
*much more precious than of Gold that perishes*,  
*though it be tried with Fire*, will be found unto  
*Praise and Honour and Glory at the appearing of*  
*Jesus Christ*: Or, sometimes, they are Means of  
*taking away the Righteous from greater Evils to*  
*come*; so that *though they seem to be punished for a*  
*little while*, yet is their *Hope full of Immortality*:  
Or, however it be, still (as the Apostle expresses  
it) *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out*  
*of Temptations*, and to *reserve the unjust unto the*  
*Day of Judgment to be punished*: And the righ-  
teous have always *this Security*, that *God is Faith-*  
*ful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above*



SERM. *that they are able; but with the Temptation also*  
 IX. *make a Way to escape, that they may be able to*  
 bear it. Nevertheless, since God only knows the  
 Events of Things, and no Man can be sure of his  
 own Strength; therefore Reason teaches, and our  
 Lord expressly directs us, to *Pray*, that we may  
 not be led into *Temptation*. And for the same  
 Reason, 'tis our Duty to be *thankful* whenever  
 Providence has prevented any Temptation from  
 coming upon us. And the Case is the same,  
 with Regard to every Sort of *Affliction* or *Calamity*  
 in Life. God is able, and will certainly cause all  
 these Things to work together for good, to those  
 who are truly and sincerely Religious. Yet, sen-  
 sible of our own Unworthiness; and knowing  
 that these Things are also sometimes Messengers  
 of *Wrath*, and Instruments of *Destruction*; 'tis  
 therefore our Duty to pray continually for the  
*Averting* of them, and to return *Thanks* for every  
*Escape of Danger* from them, and to be always  
 ready to make a religious Use either of their be-  
 ing inflicted or prevented. See that ye be not trou-  
 bled, says our Lord, for all these Things MUST  
 come to pass:—For Nation shall rise against Nation,  
 and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there shall be  
*Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers*  
*Places.*

The Particulars of this Prophecy of our  
 Lord, we have seen literally and remarkably ful-  
 filled in our own Days: And yet God has been  
 graciously pleased, not to suffer any one of these  
 Calamities

Calamities to come nigh *our* Dwellings. We SERM. have seen *Nation rise up against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom*: We have seen *Fire and Sword* consume round about us, and many fruitful Countries ravaged and destroyed; yet at the same Time, *we* have sat every Man *under his Vine and under his Fig-Tree*; injoying all the Blessings and Happiness of *Peace*, even in the midst of the most bloody and destructive *Wars*. We have seen *Want and Famine* spread Desolation over different Countries, whilst *we* have been even luxurious in the abundance of overflowing *Plenty*. We have known populous and flourishing Towns, overthrown in one Day with a Storm and *Earthquake*; while *our* Habitation has been, as the Scripture speaks, the *Munition of Rocks*: So that the Psalmist's Ground of Praise, (Ps. cxxv. 2. *As the Hills stand about Jerusalem, even so standeth the Lord round about his People*) may very properly be applied to *US*: As the *Seas encompass our Land*, may *we* no less justly say, even so has the Protection of *Providence* surrounded us on *every side*. Lastly, (which is the more immediate and particular Occasion of our meeting together at *this Time* to return Thanks to God; we have seen *that destroying Angel, the Pestilence*, executing in particular Places the unsearchable Judgments of God; but holding forth to *US* this Terror, *at a reasonable Distance only*; to admonish and warn us, (*not* to imagine that those particular Persons, upon whom this divine Judgment fell, were

SERM. were Sinners above all Men that dwell on the Earth;

IX. but that we might take Notice,) that, unless we  
 ~~~~~ repent, we shall all likewise perish. This is the  
 proper End and Design of all God's temporal  
 Judgments; to warn Men to amend: And the  
 only valuable Expression of *Thankfulness*, for his  
 having at any Time averted from us impending  
 Dangers; is our being thereby led to a more  
 careful Obedience. There is no where in the  
 whole New Testament a severer Character given  
 of incorrigible Sinners, than in those Passages  
 where they are described as not only over-look-  
 ing all the general Works of Nature and Provi-  
 dence, but as continuing moreover unmoved e-  
 ven at the most exemplary Expressions of the di-  
 vine *Wrath*, and unthankfully insensible even of  
 the most remarkable *Deliverances*. Rev. ix. 20.  
 xvi. 9. *The rest of the Men which were not killed by  
 these Plagues, yet repented not of the Works of their  
 Hands; but blasphemed the Name of God which has  
 power over these Plagues, and repented not to give  
 him Glory.* To give *Glory* to God, is, to make  
 publick Acknowledgment of our Sense of God's con-  
 tinually governing the world in Wisdom and  
 Righteousness; to profess our constant Dependance  
 upon him for all the good Things we hope for  
 in the Course of Nature which he has appointed,  
 and under the Direction of his allwise Providence;  
 to return him *Thanks* for all the *Benefits* we at any  
 Time receive, and for every *Escape* or *Deliverance*  
 vouchsafed us from impending Dangers; and to

*testify*

testify the Sincerity of these Acknowledgments, by SERM.  
our Obedience to him in the course of a virtuous IX.  
and religious Life; that others likewise, seeing our  
good Works, may glorify our Father which is in Hea-  
ven, and promote his Kingdom, which is the prac-  
tice of Virtue and Righteousness in the World.

The Things, for which it is our Duty always to  
return Thanks to God, are, in general, every  
good Thing we enjoy: Life, Health, Peace, Plen-  
ty, Liberty and every Blessing whatsoever, in which  
consists either the Happiness of the present World,  
or the Opportunities of laying a Foundation for  
that which is to come. But as these Blessings ne-  
ver appear so valuable, when by a long uninterr-  
rupted Injoyment we are accustomed to esteem  
them only the common Effects of the Course of  
Nature; as when at any Time, either by the ac-  
tual Want of them, or by very apparent Danger of  
losing them, we are led to a juster and more con-  
siderate Estimation of Things, and with a more  
attentive View to behold the Hand from whence  
they all proceed; hence it is, that either after a  
Deliverance from the Weight of any severe Judg-  
ment, or after any remarkable Escape from the  
Terror of impending Danger, we seem to be in a  
more particular manner called unto Thankfulness;  
tho' in reality the same Acknowledgment is no less  
justly due, for the constant and uniform Protec-  
tion of Providence. The Blessing of Peace, ge-  
nerally is justly esteemed and valued by those only,  
who have felt the Misery and Calamities of War:  
And



SERM. And yet without Question, 'tis a *greater Blessing*,  
 IX. to have been *always* preserved from those Calamities. The inestimable Benefit of *Liberty*, hardly ever meets with any just Returns of Thankfulness, but from such as have lately groaned under the cruel Bondage of *Tyranny* and *Oppression*; and yet, without all Controversy, in the true Estimation of Things, a *greater Acknowledgment* is due from those who have continually enjoyed that uninterrupted Protection. The Blessing of *Health* itself, that necessary Foundation of all other Enjoyments whatsoever, very rarely meets with any just Sense of its real and intrinsic Value, except in those who have long been afflicted with the *Want* of it; and yet, without Dispute, the continual *Preservation* of it, is a *greater Blessing* than the most unexpected *Recovery*. In like manner, in the Instance of the *particular Occasion* upon which we are assembled at this Time; Had it pleased God, that the devouring Pestilence had *nearly approached* our Dwellings; had it swept away our *dearest Relations*, or our most *valuable Friends*; or if even among those only, for whom we had no further Concern than what arises from the *general Ties* of *Humanity* and the *natural Sympathies* of *Neighbourhood*, we had seen *Thousands fall beside us, and ten Thousands at our right Hand*: Who is there, that does not feel within himself with what a *profound Sense* of the divine Goodness, the Survivors would have expressed their *Thankfulness* for the Mercy of *their own Deliverance*.

ance. And yet, in reality, how insensible soever SERM.  
 many of us may be of the real value of the Blessing, a greater Blessing it is (unless our own Un- IX.  
 thankfulness makes it to us cease in Event to be  
 so; a greater Blessing, I say, it is,) to have had so  
 severe a Judgment prevented from approaching  
 us at all. For this Instance therefore of the divine  
 Mercy towards us, it becomes us to return in a  
 particular Manner our most solemn Thanks. And  
 this Expression of our Duty, will then be accep-  
 table in the Sight of God; if it leaves upon our  
 Minds a lasting Impression, that, except we re-  
 pent, we shall still all perish. If the thankfulness  
 of our Mouths, be not accompanied with the real  
 Sense of our Hearts, and a suitable consequent O-  
 bedience in our Lives and Practice; God can still  
 at any Time commission his destroying Angel, to  
 smite us in a Moment. Or, if we continue to  
 provoke him, he can inflict Judgments upon us  
 much more severe than the most devouring Pestilence;  
 by delivering us into the Hands of MEN,  
 whose Mercies are cruel. He can deliver us up  
 into the lasting Tyranny of the spiritual Babylon,  
 in whom for many successive Ages has not only  
 been found the Blood of Prophets, and of Saints and  
 of all that were slain upon the Earth; but by whose  
 RELIGIOUS Sorceries also, have all Nations  
 been deceived: And whose Cruelty has not been  
 more destructive to the Lives of Men, than per-  
 nicious to their Souls also, by taking away the Key  
 of Knowledge, and establishing a blind Implicit Ig-  
 norance,

SERM. *norance*, utterly subversive of the very Foundations of all *rational Regard* to God, and of all *Truth, Justice and Righteousness* towards Men. *Hitherto* it has pleased God, to preserve us from *this* calamity also; from this *severest* of all the divine Judgments; and which, of all others, has the *most nearly* and *most continually* threatned us. For *this Preservation* therefore, ought we *likewise* continually to return our most *solemn Thanks* to the divine Majesty. And 'tis *the more reasonable* so to do, because the Calamity I am now speaking of, is *that very Tribulation*, in Comparison of which our Saviour tells us, that all the Things mention'd by him in the Text, (*Nation's rising against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and Famines, and Pestilences, and Earthquakes in divers Places; all these*, says he) are but the *BEGINNING* of Sorrows.

The *Manner*, in which *alone* we can *acceptably* return *Thanks* to God for all his *Mercies* bestowed upon us, and for *averting these* and all *other* his *Judgments*, whether they be such as are more immediately of his *own* inflicting, or whether they be such as are brought upon Men by the *Wickedness* and *Perverseness* of *others*: The *only Manner*, I say, in which we can *acceptably* return *Thanks* to the Almighty for *any* Blessing, is by having our Minds so influenced with a *real and lasting Sense* of the Goodness and Mercy of God in his Government of the World, as that we be thereby led effectually to *obey his Will* in the

Course

Course of a virtuous and religious Life, bringing SERM.  
 forth *Fruits* meet for the *Acknowledgments* we pro- IX.  
 fess to make to him. By *this*, and *this only*, can  
 our *Praises* be rendered an *acceptable Sacrifice*; Ps.  
 xxxi. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord ye RIGHTEOUS for*  
*it becometh well the JUST to be thankful.* But of  
 the *Wicked* it may be truly affirmed, that, as  
 their *Prayer*, so their *Praise* also is an *Abomination*  
*to the Lord.*

But more particularly: If we will behave our-  
 selves worthily, as those who have, really, a  
*thankful Sense* of the divine Goodness in averting  
 the Judgments which have sometimes threatned  
 us; we must, in the

1<sup>st</sup> Place, as *Believers* in God, seriously and sin-  
 cerely make use of our *Reason*, in banishing from  
 among us that *atheistical Spirit* prevailing among  
 some Men, who, whenever things are seen to pro-  
 ceed from *natural Causes*, immediately thereupon  
 they endeavour to exclude all Consideration of  
 God. As if the abstract Word, *Nature*, was a *real*  
*intelligent Agent*; or meant any Thing more, than  
 the *usual and ordinary Method* of God's governing  
 the World. Which foolish Mistake arises meerly,  
 from Men's not distinguishing the *NECESSA-*  
*RY Nature* of Things, from that *APPOINTED*  
*Course or Order of Nature*, which is nothing but  
 the *Will of God* and the *Law of his Creation*. For  
 Instance: That *two and two should make four*, or  
 that *a Body should be only in one Place at once*, is  
 the *NECESSARY Nature* of Things; and  
 could



SERM. could not have been otherwise. But when we  
 IX. say, 'tis the *Nature* of *Corn* to grow; or, 'tis the  
*Nature* of *pestilential Vapours* to destroy: In these  
 and the like Expressions, *Nature* is nothing but  
 the *voluntary Appointment* of *God*: And *natural*  
*Causes* here, do really no more exclude the Con-  
 sideration of *God*, than any one's affirming that  
 'tis the *Nature* of a *Sword* to kill, would be a rea-  
 sonable and satisfactory Ground to forbear any  
 further Inquiry by *what Hand* that Instrument of  
 Death was moved. When the Inquiry is con-  
 cerning the *efficient Agency*, by *what Power* Plants  
 and Animals are formed, by *what Power* Corn  
 grows, or Food nourishes, and the like: To  
 answer in this Case, that 'tis *their NATURE*, or  
 that 'tis *natural* for them so to do; is exactly the  
 same Thing as if a Man being asked *how* and by  
*what Architect* a *Palace* was built, should answer,  
 it was *the Nature* of it to be built of *such a Form*  
*and Bigness*.

2dly. As *Christians*; 'tis our Duty, not only in  
*general* to attend to the Hand of *God* in all the  
 Dispensations of Providence, but *moreover* to ob-  
 serve *distinctly* how all the great Events that hap-  
 pen in the World, are the *Accomplishment* of those  
 Things whereof *our Lord* admonished his Disciples  
 from the Beginning; when, in order to wean  
 them from the Vanities of this present World,  
 and to raise their Thoughts to a better, he fore-  
 told them of the *great Calamities* which should  
 fall upon the *Earth* by the *righteous Judgment* of  
*God*,

God, and the much greater Calamities which should S E R M.  
be brought upon them in particular by the Malice IX.

of unrighteous Men. See (says he) that ye be not troubled, for all these Things must come to pass:—

For Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom, and there shall be Famines and Pestilences and Earthquakes in divers Places: All these are the Beginning of Sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Sake. The Application he makes to them of the whole, is, (Luke xxi. 34.) Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

3dly. If we look upon ourselves still more particularly, as Professors of the reformed Religion; the Consideration of every Blessing we receive from the Hand of Providence, whether temporal or spiritual, will naturally remind us to express our Thankfulness to God, in Ways suitable to the Purity of the Religion we profess, and to the Knowledge he has been pleased to vouchsafe us of his Truth. We must express our real Sense of his Goodness towards us, by sincerely endeavouring to obey his Will; by departing from every Kind, and from every Degree, of Superstition; by laying aside all unchristian Heats and Animosities among ourselves, by promoting universal Peace and good Will among Men; in a Word, by showing that we place our Religion, not in fantastical Notions or

SERM. In empty Forms, but in a constant rational Acknowledgment of God, in an impartial Love of Truth, and in the habitual Practice of true Virtue, of Sobriety, Righteousness and universal Charity. This if we do; the Prophecy in the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm, we may (not without Reason) hope, even in the first and literal Sense, but in the spiritual and final Sense certainly, it shall be fulfilled to US. Who so dwelleth under the Defence of the most high, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty; He shall deliver thee from the Snare of the Hunter, and from the noisom Pestilence: Thou shalt not be afraid for any Terror by Night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by Day: For the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness, nor for the Sickness that destroyeth in the Noon-day; A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right Hand, but it shall not come nigh thee: There shall no Evil happen unto thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy Dwelling.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
O F

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, March 31, 1717.

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MATT. xvi. 18.

*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter;  
and upon this Rock I will build my Church,  
and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail a-  
gainst it.*

THE Occasion and Connexion of these SERM.  
Words, is this: Our Saviour, examining X.  
his Disciples how far they *understood* the Doctrine  
they had been taught; asks them, *ver. 13. Whom  
do Men say, that I, the Son of Man, am?* The  
very Character he here and elsewhere gives him-  
self, *I the Son of Man*, was a sufficiently plain In-  
timation *Who* he was. For the Phrase, *THE Son*  
N 2 of



SER M. of Man, necessarily signifies one who is so styled  
 X. by Way of Eminence or Distinction; and, in Dis-  
 course with Persons who had been educated *Jews*,  
 it could not but be understood to refer to the  
 Use of that Title or Character somewhere in the  
*Old Testament*. Now the Passage where 'tis men-  
 tioned in the most remarkable and distinguishing  
 Manner, is in the Prophecy of *Daniel*, ch. vii. 13.  
*Behold one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds*  
*of Heaven; (The Son of Man, which is in Heaven,*  
*as our Saviour styles himself in the Gospel, John*  
*iii. 13.) And came to the Antient of Days, and they*  
*brought him near before him: And there was given*  
*him Dominion and Glory and a Kingdom, that all*  
*People, Nations and Languages, should serve him:*  
*His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which*  
*shall not pass away; and his Kingdom that which*  
*shall not be destroyed.* The *Jews* all very well  
 knew, that this was a plain Prophecy and Cha-  
 racter of the *Messiah*. And therefore our Saviour,  
 by taking upon himself that Title by Way of E-  
 minence, *THE Son of Man*; clearly enough in-  
 timated, *whom* he professed himself to be. How-  
 ever, in order to put his Disciples upon a more  
 distinct Declaration *how far* they had hitherto un-  
 derstood him; and thereby to introduce a new Oc-  
 casion of giving them further and more particu-  
 lar Instructions; he asks them, ver. 13. *Whom do*  
*Men say that I am?* The Disciples answered; *Some*  
*say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and*  
*others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.* He saith  
 unto

unto them, but whom say ye that I am? Simon Pe- SERM.  
 ter answered, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living* X.  
 God. Then said Jesus unto him, *Blessed art thou,*  
 Simon Barjona, *for Flesh and Blood hath not reveal-*  
*ed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.*  
 That is, the Confession you have made, is not a  
*bare human Conjecture* or Opinion; as the Jews  
 had guessed him to be either *Elias*, or *John the*  
*Baptist*, or one of the old Prophets risen from the  
 Dead: But *your* Confession (says he,) is the *very*  
*Truth*; which God has enabled you to discover.  
*And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter,* ver.  
 18. *Thou Simon the Son of Jonah*, shalt for the  
 future be known by the Name of *Peter*, which  
 signifies a *Rock*, a firm and constant, an unshaken  
 and immoveable, Professor of the Truth. 'Tis  
 very usual in Scripture, to give Men in this Man-  
 ner *emphatical* and *significant* Names. Thus, *Gen.*  
*xvii. 5. Thy Name shall be Abraham, for a Father*  
*of many Nations* (so the Word *Abraham* signifies  
 in the original,) *a Father of many Nations have I*  
*made thee.* Again, *Gen. xxxii. 28. Thy Name shall*  
*be called Israel; for as a Prince hast thou Power*  
*with God and with Men, and hast prevailed.* So  
 here likewise, *thou art Peter*, that is, a *Rock*; a  
 firm and constant, a faithful and unshaken Wit-  
 ness, Support, and Defender of the Truth. *And*  
*upon this Rock*, upon this Firmness and steddiness  
 of yours in professing and preaching the great  
 Truths of the Gospel, upon this *will I build my*  
*Church; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail*  
against

SERM. against it. And I will give unto thee the Keys of  
 X. the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt  
 bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.

In order to the fuller and clearer Understanding of which whole Discourse of our Saviour; it will be necessary to explain from the Beginning, the Nature and Meaning, the Ground and Reason, of that Metaphor or Figure of speaking, which in numberless other Places of Scripture, as well as in this Text, is used with great Propriety and Elegance in the Description of the Church of Christ. 'Tis to be observed therefore, that God having antiently placed his Name in *Jerusalem*, that is, having appointed it to be the Seat of his Throne and Worship, the Place of Confluence of the Worshippers of the one true God; and thereby made it by Way of Eminence *the City of the great King, the holy City*; it from thence became, in the prophetick Style and Language, a Type of *Heaven*. From hence, in the New Testament, the *State of Heaven* is figuratively styled, *Jerusalem which is above*, Gal. iv. 26. *Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem*, Heb. xii. 22. And in the *Revelation* particularly, 'tis described at large, under the Notion of a glorious and happy City; *ch. xxi. 10. He shewed me that great City, the holy Jerusalem, descended out of Heaven from God; having the Glory of God, and her Light was like unto a Stone most precious:—*

And

*And the City was pure Gold;—and the Foundations* SERM.  
*were garnished with all Manner of precious Stones.* X.

To which Description, the Apostle plainly alludes, *Heb. ix. 16.* And again in the same Chapter, *they desire* (says he) *a better Country,* ver. 16. *that is, an heavenly:* And, Abraham looked for a ver. 10. *City which hath Foundations,* (in the Original it is, *THE City which hath THE Foundations*) whose Builder and Maker is God. Hence still further, in Pursuance of the same Similitude, the Church of God, even here upon EARTH, is styled the City, the Temple, and the House of God. The City of God. *Pf. xlv. 4.* The Streams thereof, shall make glad the CITY of God. *Heb. xii. 22.* Ye are come unto—the CITY of the living God,—the general Assembly and Church of the first-born whose Names are written in Heaven. Also the Temple of God: *1 Cor. iii. 16.* Ye are the TEMPLE of God; And *2 Cor. vi. 16.* Ye are the TEMPLE of the Living God. *Eph. ii. 19.* Ye are Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God; and are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone; in whom the whole Building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy TEMPLE in the Lord; in whom also you are builded together; for an Habitation of God through the Spirit. And, *2 Thess. ii. 3.* That Man of Sin,—sitting in the TEMPLE of God; That is, a general Apostacy and Love of worldly Power, overspreading the visible Church. Lastly, 'tis



SERMON. styled likewise *the HOUSE* of God: 1 Tim. iii. 15. *The HOUSE* of God, which is *the Church*, Heb. iii. 6. *whose HOUSE* are we. 1 Cor. iii. 9. *Ye* are God's *BUILDING*. 1 Pet. ii. 5. *Ye* also as lively *Stones*, are built up a *spiritual HOUSE* unto God. And, ch. iv. 17. *Judgment* must begin at *the HOUSE* of God.

Now the *Church* of God being thus usually, (upon the Occasion and for the Reasons already explained,) represented in Scripture under the figurative Notion of a *holy City*, or *Temple*, or *House* of God; the several *Parts* of it likewise, in Pursuance of the same Metaphor, are described proportionably under the *like* Figures of Speech, as the *whole*. Hence the Word *Foundation*, as denoting the most material Part and Support of the whole Building, is elegantly made Use of to signify either such *Men* or *Things*, such *Persons* or *Doctrines*, upon which the whole of Religion mainly relies, and by which it is principally supported.

Sometimes it is applied to *Doctrines*: To denote those *great*, those *Primary*, those *necessary* and *essential* Doctrines of Religion; upon which, all other true Doctrines are built; without which, Religion cannot subsist; and of which, no Christian can innocently or excusably be ignorant. These are styled, Heb. v. 12. *The first Principles of the Oracles of God*; and, Heb. vi. 1. *The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*, and *the Foundation*. In modern Language, they are usually called *the Fundamentals* of Religion; the Doctrines, where-

in *Christianity itself* consists; in Opposition to *SERM.*  
those, which distinguish from each other the *X.*  
several *Sects* or *Parties* of Christians. In the *former*, consists all true Virtue and Piety: The *latter*, are the Occasions of never-ceasing Contentions, Schisms and Uncharitableness. *What* these fundamental Doctrines in particular *are*, (though St. Paul has given us an express Catalogue of them, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.*) seldom any Sect or Party of Christians are willing to define; because by so doing they would plainly discover, that the Things about which they generally most fiercely contend, are indeed no necessary Parts of Religion *at all*. But in the *Scripture itself*, these fundamental Doctrines are perpetually insisted on; and inculcated, as those on which in reality *the whole* of Religion depends. And the teaching or preaching of these Doctrines, is what St. Paul calls *Laying the Foundation*, (*Heb. vi. 1. and 1 Cor. iii. 10.*) According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise Master-builder I have laid the FOUNDATION. But let every Man (says he) take heed of building thereupon: For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The Meaning is, no Man can make any Thing else to be fundamental in Religion, besides what Christ himself has made to be so. If any Man build upon this Foundation, Gold, Silver, precious Stones; if he preaches the true Doctrine of the Gospel, and builds thereupon virtuous Practice; he shall receive

SERM. receive a Reward, ver. 14. If he corrupts the

X. Doctrine of Christ in its essentials, and teaches Men any vicious Practice; he shall be punished very severely. If he builds *Wood, Hay, Stubble*; that is, if he teaches needless and useless, tho' not vicious Doctrines; *he shall suffer Loss*, he shall in great Part lose his Reward: Nevertheless, for the Sincerity of his Intention, *he himself shall be saved, yet so as by Fire*, ver. 15. The Sense is, *He shall be saved DIFFICULTLY, as it were out of the Fire*; According to the like Expression in St. Jude, ver. 22. *Of some have Compassion, making a Difference; and others save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire.*

But further: The Word, *Foundation*, as it is thus sometimes applied Figuratively to *Doctrines* fundamental; so, at other Times, it is in a proportionable Sense, applied likewise to *Persons*. Thus (in the Passage before-cited,) Eph. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the FOUNDATION of the APOSTLES and PROPHETS.* From whence is derived that elegant and lively Description, Rev. xxi. 14. *The Wall of the City had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.* Jesus Christ himself, is the chief Corner-stone: The Apostles and Prophets are the Foundation: And the Church or entire Body of good Men through all Ages, are the whole Building or spiritual Temple of God; in which ye also, saith the Apostle, (*ye also, as living Stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5.*) are builded together,  
for

for an Habitation of God through the Spirit. And SERM.  
 such Persons, as, after the first preaching of the X.  
 Gospel, were, in a more eminent and illustrious  
 Manner, Promoters of true Religion; are, by  
 continuing the same Similitude, aptly called  
*Pillars*, Gal. ii. 19. James, Cephas and John,  
*who seemed to be PILLARS*. And Rev. iii. 12.  
*Him that overcometh will I make a PILLAR in*  
*the Temple of my God*. Which Passages, by the  
 Way, teach us to rectify a Mistake in the vul-  
 gar Interpretation of that noble Text of St.  
 Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 15. *That thou mayst know how to*  
*behave thyself in the House of God, which is the*  
*Church of the living God, the PILLAR and*  
*Ground of Truth*. That St. Paul in one and the  
 same Sentence, wherein he calls the Church the  
 HOUSE of God, should at the same Time style  
 it also a PILLAR, which is a Part of that  
 House; is very hard to conceive. From the  
 fore-cited Places therefore, and others of the  
 like Import, where the same Word is always  
 applied to single PERSONS; it seems very  
 probable, that here also it ought to be under-  
 stood, not of the whole Church, but of one Per-  
 son only, even of Timothy himself: *That thou*  
*mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in*  
*the House of God; which is the Church of the liv-*  
*ing God; that thou mayest know how to behave*  
*thyself therein, in such Manner, (as being, or)*  
*as that thou mayest be a Pillar and eminent Sup-*  
*port of the Truth*. The Sense is much more rea-  
 sonable,



S E R M. sonable, and agreeable to other Places of Scripture; and removes a difficult Expression, much abused and perverted by Popish Writers to support their absurd Doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church.

X.

Having thus fully and at large explained from its first Original, the Nature and Meaning, the Ground and Reason, of that Metaphor or Figure of Speaking, which in numberless other Places of Scripture, as well as in my Text, is used with great Propriety and Elegance in the Description of the Church of Christ; it from hence becomes very easy to understand the true Sense of these Words of our Saviour, *Thou art Peter, Thou art (as thy Name signifies) a Rock; and upon this Rock will I build my Church.* The Church is the City, the Temple, the House or Building of God. In this spiritual Temple of God, *Jesus Christ himself is the chief Corner-stone, in whom the whole Building is fitly framed together.* And the *Apostles and Prophets*, are the *Foundation*. Among these, St. Peter having, with a particular Forwardness and Zeal, made Confession of his believing Christ to be the *Messias*; was accordingly approved by his Master, and receives the following Answer: *Thou shalt be, (says our Lord,) one principal Foundation-stone in my Building.* By thy Firmness and Stedfastness, by thy Courage, Constancy and Zeal in this Confession, thou shalt become an eminent *Founder* of my Church, a most successful Preacher of my Doctrine

trine to the World, in the first Age of the Gos- S E R M.  
 pel, *Thou art Peter, Thou art a Rock; and upon X.*  
*this Rock I will build my Church.*

It follows: *And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* That is, Opposition and Persecution, even unto *Death itself*, shall never be able to stop the Progress of my Gospel. The Word, which we here render *Hell*, signifies in <sup>Adm.</sup> the Original, not *the State of the damned*, (for *That* is always in the Greek expressed by a very different Word;) But the Word *here* used, signifies always *that invisible State in general only*, <sup>ruins.</sup> to which *Death* is the Gate or Passage. So that this Phrase in the Text, is exactly of the same Import with those Expressions in the Old Testament: *Gates of the Grave*, the *Chambers of Death*, and *the Gates of Death*. Ps. xxxviii. 10. *I shall go to the Gates of the Grave.* Prov. vii. 27. *The Way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death.* Job xxxviii. 17. *Have the Gates of Death been opened unto thee?* Ps. ix. 13. *Thou liftest me up from the Gates of Death:* And, Ps. cvii. 18. *They draw near unto the Gates of Death.* When therefore our Saviour promises that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, of *Death*; (for the Word *Hell*, as I now observed, when it means *the State of the damned*, is always in the Original quite another Word:) When, I say, our Saviour promises that the *Gates of Hell*, that is, of *Death*, *shall not prevail against* his Church; his Meaning plainly is the same, as in those other Promises, *Matt. xxviii.*

SERM. 20. *Lo, I am with you always even unto the End of the World*; your Mortality shall not put an End to the preaching of my Gospel. And, *ch. xvii. 20. Where two or three, (wheresoever or whensoever, in what Place or at what Time soever in any Age of the World, two or three) are gathered together in my Name; there am I in the midst of them.*

Lastly, Our Saviour adds in the *next* Words, immediately following the Text: *And I will give unto THEE the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: And whatsoever THOU shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever THOU shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.* The Sense is; thou shalt first *open* the Kingdom of the *Messias*, and make the *first Publication* of the Gospel to the Gentiles; (which we read was accordingly fulfilled, in the *2d*, *10th*, and *15th* Chapters of the *Acts*.) And by the Terms of *that Doctrine* which I commission you to preach *on Earth*, shall every Man's Sentence be finally and judicially determined of God in *Heaven*.

And now, having distinctly explained the full meaning of our Saviour, in this whole Discourse of his to *St. Peter*; it will be very obvious to raise from thence the following Observations.

1<sup>st</sup>, I observe, that according to the true Explication of the Word, it makes no real Difference at all in the Sense, whether by the *Rock* upon which our Saviour here promises to build his Church, be meant (as *Protestant* Expositors generally understand it) the *Confession* of *St. Peter*,

or

or (as the *Romish* Writers contend) the *Person* of *St. Peter*. I say, it makes no Difference at all, as to the true Sense of the Words. For, if this *Rock* be the *CONFESSION* of *St. Peter*; yet the Application of the Phrase to *him* in so particular a Manner, must needs be with Regard to his *personal* Firmness and Steadiness in that *Confession*. From whence nothing can be collected to the Advantage of the Cause of the Church of *Rome*. For,

2dly, I observe, that the Word *Rock*, the *Foundation-stone* of a Building, a strong or well-laid Support, is not at all (as the Church of *Rome* ridiculously supposes) an Emblem of *Authority*, *Power* or *Dominion*; but it signifies *firm* and *constant*, effectual and successful, preaching of the Gospel at the Beginning: Which was the *Foundation* of the Church of Christ. Which *Church*, the Scripture tells us, was built upon the *Foundation* of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*. And in that Foundation, *St. Peter* was a *Rock*, or a firm and eminent Part of it.

3dly, I observe, that *immediately* after the speaking of these great Things to *St. Peter*; our Lord, (as it were with a *particular View* that it might be left upon Record as a Guard against that extravagant Opinion, which he foreknew future Ages, for the Purposes of Tyranny and worldly Dominion would entertain of *St. Peter's* personal Authority:) our Lord, I say, takes Occasion in his very *next* Discourse with him, to rebuke him with



SERM. with a *sharper Severity* than he ever used toward  
 X. any of the rest of his Disciples. *Ver. 23. Get thee  
 behind me, Satan; thou art an Offence unto me; for  
 thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but those  
 that be of Men.* And probably for the very same  
*Reason* it is, that he was suffered to fall and to  
 deny his Master, more shamefully than any of the  
 other Disciples; and that 'tis particularly record-  
 ed in Scripture-history, how St. Paul afterwards  
 withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blam-  
 ed, Gall. ii. 11. Of the same Kind seems to be  
 our Saviour's affecting, as it were, to speak al-  
 ways with very small Respect of the blessed Vir-  
 gin: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* And,  
*Yea RATHER blessed are they, that bear the Word  
 of God, and keep it.* And again, *Who is my Mo-  
 ther, and who are my Brethren?* — Behold, who-  
 soever shall do the Will of my Father which is in  
 Heaven, the same is my Brother and Sister and Mo-  
 ther.

4thly, I observe, that as the Word *Rock* sig-  
 nifies nothing of *Authority* or *Dominion*, but a *Stone*  
 or *firm Part in the FOUNDATION* on which  
 the Church is built; so it is a *Character*, in which  
 St. Peter could not possibly have *ANY Successors*;  
 in any other Sense, than in that wherein he him-  
 self applies it to *ALL Christians in general*; in his  
 first Epistle, ch. ii. 5. *YE also* (saith he) *as living  
 Stones are built up a spiritual House unto God.* And  
 St. Paul to the Ephesians, ch. ii. 22. *You also are  
 builded together, upon the Foundation of the A-  
 postles*

postles and Prophets, into an holy Temple: *for* SERM.  
*an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit:* *dw* *flur* T XX

5thly, I observe, that what is here said to St. Peter, is elsewhere applied equally to *ALL the Apostles*. The City of God, saith St. John, had *twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb*. The Church was built equally upon them *All*. And our Saviour with great Expressness and Earnestness charges them, that there should be no such thing as *Dominion or Prebeminence* amongst them; but *whosoever* (says he) *will be great among you, let him be your Servant*, Matt. xx. 27. Further: That which is here spoken to St. Peter about having *the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, is elsewhere expressly directed to *ALL the Apostles*: John xx. 23. *Whose soever Sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever Sins YE retain, they are retained*. The full Meaning of which sublime Expressions, is that not even the *Apostles themselves*, (much less that any of their fallible *Successors*) had a *discretionary Power* of forgiving or retaining Men's Sins; but, that they were appointed Preachers and Messengers of that gracious Covenant of Reconciliation, according to the *Terms and Conditions* whereof, God will either forgive Men's Sins or not. God will judge Men *according to OUR Gospel*; or by the Rule of that Doctrine, which *we* are commanded to preach to the

SERM. World. St. Paul expresses the Sense of this  
 X. Trust; with the greatest Exactness of Expres-  
 sion, *Rom. ii. 16.* *In the Day, says he, when  
 God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ,  
 according to MY Gospel.*

A SER-

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH

O F  
St. James's Westminster,

On Sunday, March 23, 1718.

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GEN. xv. 6.

*And he believed in the Lord, and he counted  
it to him for Righteousness.*

THESE Words are Part of the History S E R M.  
of the Patriarch Abraham. Who when, XI.  
in his old Age, being yet childless, he had a  
Promise made to him, that his Posterity should  
be as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude; not-  
withstanding the natural Improbability of the  
Thing, (yet the Text tells us) *he believed in the  
Lord, and the Lord counted it to him for Right-  
eousness.*



SERM. *teousness*. The Words are very remarkable:

XI. And they are in the *New Testament* cited, *three* several Times. By the Apostle St. *James*, once: And by St. *Paul* twice; in his Epistle to the *Romans*, and again in his Epistle to the *Galatians*. By St. *Paul* they are cited to *prove*, that since *Abraham's Faith* was here reckoned to him for Righteousness, *before* the Institution of Circumcision; therefore *Justification*, or the Favour and Acceptance of God, *is not* confined and limited to the Observers of the *Works* of the *Jewish Law*, but extends itself to *all Men*, of *all Nations*, who *walk in the Steps of the Faith of Abraham*. By St. *James* they are cited to *prove* at the same Time, that since the *Faith of Abraham* here reckoned to him for Righteousness, was not a mere *unactive Belief*, but an *effectual Principle* of real active Obedience; therefore *Justification*, or the Favour and Acceptance of God, *is confined* and limited, though *not* to the Observers of the *Jewish Law*, yet *certainly* to the Practicers of the *Virtue and Righteousness* of the *Gospel*. The *Application* of the Words to *each* of these Purposes respectively, is as *natural and pertinent* as possible; and the *Inference* drawn from them, in *each Case*, is most *obvious and certain*. My Design is not, at this Time, to enlarge any further upon the Manner of reconciling St. *Paul* and St. *James*; (which has often been done upon *other Occasions*, and is *sufficiently evident* from the *single Observation* I now mention-

ed;) but to consider *what* Matter of *Instruction* SERM.  
 may be drawn from the *Words themselves*; as they XI.  
 lie before us in the Text; Abraham *believed in*   
*the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.*

*Faith, or Belief in God, is the Foundation and Ground of virtuous Practice.* And in Proportion as this Foundation is deeply and strongly laid, in the same Proportion will the Superstructure be durable and permanent against the Attacks of worldly Temptations. For though Virtue is Virtue, whether there were any God or no; and the doing of what is Right, would be unquestionably commendable, though there were no Reward or Punishment either here or hereafter: Yet, in that Case, the Nature of Things would be absurd; and the System of the Universe would be, in the whole, an inconsistency. For, that *that which is Right in itself, and necessarily so judged to be by every right Understanding, and which by Consequence lays a necessary and perpetual Obligation upon all; should yet not be finally and effectually supported;* is really and truly as Great an Inconsistency in the Notion of the Moral Universe, as if in the *natural World* any of the greatest and most exquisite Operations, were without any Correspondent *final Cause*. By *this Argument* therefore the wisest and most rational Men in the *heathen World*, who had no Assistance of Revelation at all, yet worked themselves up to a very strong Persuasion, both of the *Being* and of the *righteous Government of God*. By the

SERMON *same Argument the Patriarchs, who had no Express*  
 XI. Revelation of a future State, yet reasoned themselves into such Acts of Obedience towards God, as overcame the strongest Temptations in the World. Of *Instances* of this Kind, the whole *11th* Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is an affectionate Collection. And the *Application* of these *Examples*, to *Christians* who profess to have a more explicit Knowledge of a Life to come, is Matter of very just and severe Reproach. That which alone falls, at this Time, under our Consideration; and is, more frequently than any, insisted upon in many other Places likewise of holy Scripture; is the *Example* of *Abraham*, *Abraham* believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.

*Faith*, is that Belief of a God; of his Existence, Perfections, Government and Promises; That Belief of Things invisible, and of Things future; which is the proper Motive, whereby virtuous and religious Minds are supported in the Practice of what is Just and Right, in Opposition to all the Allurements, and to all the Threatnings, laid before them at any Time by an idolatrous, an unrighteous or a debauched World. In Proportion to the Strength or Weakness of this Faith. Minds sensible of the natural and intrinsic Excellency of Virtue, are enabled to resist more and greater Temptations of all Kinds, and thereby to bear Testimony to the Excellency of Virtue, and to cause its Light to shine forth in the World: Which is promoting the Glory of God, and of his Government.

ment. These *Temptations*, are what the Scripture SERM.  
 calls the *Trial of Men's Faith*. And God, when XI.  
 in the Course of his Providence, he permits them  
 to be laid before Men, is in Scripture represented  
 as *making Tryal of them* thereby. Not for *his own*  
 Information, who knows perfectly the Hearts of  
 all Men: But for *their own* Benefit, whose Minds  
 are greatly improved thereby: And for the Ad-  
 vantage of *others*, who are extremely encouraged  
 by such Examples. It has therefore been the  
 Method of Providence from the Beginning, not  
 only by the *Precepts of Nature* and *Reason*, con-  
 firmed by repeated *Revelations* of his Will, and  
 strengthened with the Sanction of *Rewards* and  
*Punishments*; but by *Example* also upon perpetual  
 Record, of some *Nation, Family*, or very emi-  
 nent *Person*, adhering singly to the Worship of  
 the one true God, and to the Religion built upon  
 that only Foundation, to *enlighten* the World, as  
 it were, by a *Light shining in a dark Place* and  
 continually *reminding* them of the *Truth* they have  
 departed from: Calling upon them (in the *Pro-*  
*phets* Expression) by a *Standard lift up unto the Na-*  
*tions*, and by an *Ensign on a Hill*; or (according to  
 our *Saviour's* Similitude) by a *City built upon a*  
*Hill*, which *cannot be hid*; and by a *Light set on a*  
*Candlestick, which giveth Light unto all that are in*  
*the House*. Of this Kind, was a *Succession of Fa-*  
*milies* before the Flood; and the Family of *Noah*,  
 and of *Melchisedec* and *Job*, and perhaps some o-  
 thers also, and the *Patriarchs* after the Flood.



SERM

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Of the same sort, was the Nation of the Jews, even notwithstanding all their particular Corruptions, before the coming of Christ: And since that Time, such also has been the Christian Church; in which, notwithstanding the greatest and most universal Corruptions, still the Pearl of great Price, the Principles of Truth and Virtue, have always more or less shined forth, in some particular Places at least, as a Light appearing through a very thick Mist. But that which my present Subject confines me to, is the single Example of Abraham: Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteousness.

If it be here inquired, with Regard to this Method in the Proceedings of Providence; whence it comes to pass that the Light of divine Truth, and the Manifestations God has been pleased to make of himself to Mankind, have not been more general and universal: The answer is; that though in this, and indeed in all other Cases whatsoever, we know not in particular the manifold distinct Reasons of God's Manner of acting, as indeed 'tis impossible we should; yet in general 'tis manifest, that this Disposition of Things is according to the Analogy of God's usual Method of acting in all other Cases. It has seem'd good to infinite Wisdom to shew forth itself, as in forming an unspeakable Variety of other Beings of all Kinds, so in creating particularly a great Diversity of rational Creatures, of Angels and Men; endowed with very different Capacities, intrusted

in numberless Instances with very different *Talents*, SERM.  
 instructed with very different *Degrees* of *Light* and XI.  
*Knowledge*; so as to be each of them capable of  
 being called to *Account*, of being judged according  
 to their respective *Abilities*, according to the  
*Measure* and *Degree* of their respective *Knowledge*,  
 according to the Nature of their several *Stations*,  
 and of the *Talents* in innumerable different Cir-  
 cumstances committed to their Trust. The Case  
 therefore *here* is the *very same*, even in Respect  
 of *natural Reason* itself, as of other *more particu-*  
*lar* Manifestations of the divine Pleasure. Both  
 the *one* and the *other* have shined forth, only in  
 particular *Places*, and at particular *Times*, in dif-  
 ferent *Degrees*; as *Lights* sufficient to direct such as  
 were *sincerely desirous* of finding out and following  
 the Truth; and to be a *Testimony* against *others*,  
 who neither *liked* to retain their *natural Knowledge*  
 of God, nor cared to be instructed in his *Will re-*  
*vealed*. But this, by the Way.

The *Faith* of *Abraham*, so highly magnified in  
 Scripture, and which (the Text tells us) was *coun-*  
*ted to him for Righteousness*, evidenced itself prin-  
 cipally in *two* remarkable Instances, the *one* was,  
 his leaving his native Country at the Command  
 of God, separating himself from the idolatrous  
 Nations around him, and going into a strange  
 Land; firmly believing that God *was faithful*,  
*who had promised* that his Posterity should inherit  
 that Land; and that from *him*, even when *as*  
*good as dead*, there should spring *so many as the*  
*Stars*

SERM. *Stars of the Sky in Multitude, and as the Sand which*  
 XI. *is by the Sea-shore innumerable, Heb. xi. 12. The*

*other Instance was, that when he was tried, he offered up his only Son, in whom alone seemed to center all the Promises God had made him; thus even against Hope (as St. Paul most elegantly expresses it,) believing IN Hope; and being fully persuaded, that what God had promised, who quickeneth the Dead, and calleth those Things which be not as though they were, he was able also to perform, Rom. iv. 17, 18, 21. The Excellency of this Faith, in both these Instances, consisted in this; that it was a Principle of Virtue or Obedience to God, built upon this Foundation; that God who ruleth over all, can and will certainly make good, either in the present or in a future State, all the Expectations raised in the Minds of virtuous and good Men, either by the natural Knowledge of his divine Attributes, or by the revealed Declarations of his Will. And this the Apostle, in each of the forementioned Cases, expressly declares. In the Case of Abraham's offering up his Son, the Ground he tells us the Patriarch went upon, was his Persuasion, that Death itself puts not an End to the Possibilities of the divine Favour; but that God was able to make good the Promises given to him and his Son, even by a Resurrection from the Dead, Heb. xi. 19. In the other Case, that of the Patriarch's separating himself from the idolatrous Nations, and going into a strange Country; the Apostle thus expresses the Ground and*

Foun-

Foundation, on which his Faith was built. Heb. SERM.  
xi. 8. By Faith Abraham, when he was called to go XI.

out into a Place which he should after receive for an Inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. And he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country;—For he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. And what that City was, the same Apostle distinctly explains, ver. 14. speaking of Abraham and his Posterity: They that say such Things, (viz. confessing that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth,) declare plainly that they seek a Country: And truly if they had been mindful of that Country from whence they came out, they might have had Opportunity to have returned: But now they desire a better Country, that is, an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a City. 'Tis evident therefore that the Faith of Abraham, was a Principle of Virtue or Obedience to God, founded upon the Expectation of a future State. And because he thus believed God, therefore 'twas accounted to HIM; and to all others likewise in all Generations, who shall be governed, as he was, by their Belief in God; to them also it shall be counted for Righteousness.

From this Explication of the Nature and Excellency of the Faith of Abraham, there may be drawn some very considerable general Observations, of great Extent and Consequence in the Notion and Practice of true Religion. As

1<sup>st</sup>.



S E R M. 1<sup>st</sup>. From hence we may observe, that *no*

XI. *Faith* is always founded upon *Reason*. *Abraham*

believed, *What?* why, that God would certainly make good to *him* and his *Posterity*, every Thing that he had promised. And *Why* did he believe *this*? Why, because *Reason* told him, that, whatever *Improbabilities* appeared at present; yet God, who has *Power* over the *future* as well as the *present* State, was able to fulfil his Promises, even by a *Resurrection from the Dead*. This the *Apostle* expressly observes, upon that difficult Tryal of his offering up his Son, *Heb. xii. 19. He accounted, that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead; from whence also he had received him in a Figure. He accounted: The Word in the Original is, (λογισάμενος,) he reasoned with himself: His Reason* satisfied him, that the *Power of God* could as easily raise again his Son *from the Dead*, as it had at first caused him to be born from one as good as *Dead*. He had before received him as it were from the *Dead* in a *Figure*, by his being born to him in an *extreme old Age*; and now he doubted not, but God could *literally* restore him from the *Dead* again. This was a *Faith*, truly founded upon *Reason*. And no less *reasonable* is it in *US* to believe now, that the same divine *Power* which at first created Men into the *present* Life, can as easily renew them into a Life to come. In *this*, there is nothing contrary to the Dictates of *right Reason*, or to the *Analogy of Nature*. How different from this,

this, is the Practice of those, who under Pre-  
 tence of the Divine Omnipotence, require Men to  
 profess their Belief of Contradictions; such as is  
 Transubstantiation, and the like; and all other na-  
 tural or moral Impossibilities. For to ascribe to  
 the divine Power Things that are not at all the  
 Objects of Power, and to suppose that God makes  
 Things to be what at the same he does not make  
 them to be; is not magnifying the Power of God,  
 but profanely making a Mockery of it. True  
 Faith therefore, is always founded upon Reason.  
 And as, in all other Cases, the Strength of every  
 Superstructure is proportionable to the Goodness  
 of the Foundation on which it is built: So in  
 Matters of Religion, the Steadiness of every Man's  
 Virtue is always proportionable to the Firmness  
 of his Belief of the Principles he acts upon; and  
 the Stability of this Belief, in Opposition to a  
 careless and negligent Credulity, will always be  
 found, upon any difficult Tryal, to be in Pro-  
 portion as 'tis more or less reasonably grounded:  
 For this Cause it is, that our Saviour so highly  
 commends the Faith of the Centurion, who from  
 the Analogy of his own being a Man under Au-  
 thority, and having Soldiers under him, reasoned  
 himself into a Persuasion that Jesus also was able  
 to heal his Servant, without coming himself in  
 Person to visit him: Verily, says our Lord, I  
 have not found so great Faith, no, not in Israel,  
 Matt. viii. 10. And in like Manner concerning  
 the Canaanitish Woman, who from the Simili-  
 tude

SERMON. tude of the *Dogs eating the Crumbs that fell from their Master's Table*, argued reasonably that she, tho' a Stranger from the Common-wealth of *Israel*, yet needed not wholly to despair of our Lord's Favour; *O Woman*, says he, *great is thy Faith*, Matt. xv. 28. Upon the same Ground the *Jews*, who could judge well enough about other Things, and argue reasonably about the Tokens of the *Sky* and the *Weather*, and make proper Observations in the Course of the *natural World*, but had no discernment at all, in Matters of *Religion*; are thus reprov'd by our Lord, Luke xii. 27. *Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* On the contrary, the *Bereans*, who searched the *Scriptures* carefully, to see what Reason there might be for their embracing the Doctrine preach'd by the Apostles; are commended thereupon, as being of a more noble and generous Temper, *Acts* xvii. 11. And St. Paul arguing to the *Corinthians* concerning a very important Point of Christian Doctrine; *I speak* (says he) *as to wise Men, judge ye what I say*, 1 Cor. x. 15. This therefore is the first Observation, naturally arising from the foregoing Discourse: viz. that true Faith, is always founded upon Reason.

2dly, A second Observation is, that true Faith in God, never leads Men to the Practice of any Thing, that is essentially and in its own Nature immoral. Of this Sort are the *Idolatries* practis'd in the Church of *Rome*, fundamentally destructive

destructive of all both natural and revealed No. SERM. 2  
 tions of God. Of the same Kind are the Cruel- XL  
 ties and Barbarities perpetually practised by  
 them, fundamentally destructive of all Virtue  
 towards Men, and of the very essential, eternal  
 and unalterable Differences of Good and Evil.  
 Things established by the mere positive Command  
 even of God himself, may, without Contro-  
 versy, be changed by the same Authority that  
 appointed them. Further: Things contrary to  
 that Part even of the Law of Nature itself,  
 which is founded originally in the Will of God,  
 and not in the Necessary and Essential Nature of  
 Things; may be done, upon particular and ex-  
 traordinary Occasions, by the immediate and  
 express Command of God. But that Part of  
 the Law of Nature, which is founded, not on  
 Will, but on the very Existence of God, and on  
 the essentially and eternally immutable Nature and  
 Relation of Things; This is in no Circumstances  
 capable of any Variation. For Instance: That  
 the Life of an innocent Person should be taken  
 away by the Authority of any Power upon  
 Earth, is contrary to the Law of Nature. Ne-  
 vertheless, since the Right which even an inno-  
 cent Person has to his Life, is not founded in  
 the essential Nature of Things, but merely in  
 the Will and Free-Gift of God; 'tis plain he may  
 as justly appoint it to be taken away by any  
 other Means he pleases, as by a Fever or a Pesti-  
 lence. But had God commanded Abraham to  
 for.



SERM. forsake the worship of *himself*, and turn to *Idols*;

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or had he commanded him to *hate* his blameless Son, or to *take Delight* in *Cruelty*, *Barbarity*, and *Tyranny*; the Command had been, in its Nature, *impossible* and *absurd*. Again! The seven wicked Nations of *Canaan* might, by a *particular* and *immediate* Command of God, as justly be extirpated by the Sword of the *Israelites*, as by an Earthquake, or (like *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*,) by Lightning from Heaven. But that, *without* any *immediate* and *express* Command, and under a *general* Pretence of being alone Possessors of the *Truth*, a *perpetual tyrannical Enmity* should be carried on against *virtuous* Men of all Nations, and a Power established of changing even the *Nature* of *Virtue* and *Vice*; this is a Wickedness which never had an Equal; and subverts fundamentally even *that Part* of the Law of Nature, which is founded, not on the *Will*, but on the very *Being* of God, and on the *necessary*, *essential*, and *eternal Difference* of *Good* and *Evil*.

3dly, The *third* and *last* Observation I would here make, is, that *Faith* when spoken of in Scripture as a Moral Virtue, never signifies *mere Belief*; but always includes in it a Notion of *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness*, a *faithful* and *steadfast Adherence* to such *Principles*, even in Times of the greatest Danger and Difficulty, as are the *Foundation* or *Ground* of *Virtue* and *Obedience*. *Abraham believed God*; (who had *Faith* or *Fidelity* towards God; *adhered* firmly to his *Principles*, and

acted

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*steddily upon them in Matters even of the* greatest Tryal and Difficulty: *He kept the Faith,* as St. Paul speaks concerning himself; or, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses it, *he kept that which was committed to his Charge:)* And therefore it was counted unto him for Righteousness: It was reckoned to him, it was allowed to him in his Account, (so the Word is in the Original;) not, *INSTEAD* of Righteousness, but as being itself real Righteousness. This Matter is rightly represented by the Author of the Book of Eccus. ch. xliv. 19. *Abraham was a great Father of many People; in Glory was there none like unto him: Who kept the Law of the most High, and was in Covenant with him;—and when he was proved, he was found Faithful: Therefore he assured him by an Oath, that he would bless the Nations in his Seed, and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the utmost Part of the Land.* And from hence 'tis very evident *what* the Writers of the New Testament intend, when they declare to us that *Abraham*, tho' he was not justified by the Works of the Law, such as Circumcision, and the like, because this Testimony was given of him before he was circumcised; yet the Faith by which he WAS justified, was an active and steddy Principle of Works of Righteousness: And by that Faith was he therefore justified, because it was a Faith which wrought with his Works, and by Works was his Faith made per-

Jam. ii. 27.

SERM. *feet*. And the Application they make of it to Us,  
XI. is, that *they*, and *they only*, who walk in the Steps  
of the Faith of Abraham, are, in the religious Esti-  
mation, Abraham's Seed. That is; *they only*  
shall finally be accepted of God, whose Faith is,  
like *His*, a real Principle of Virtue and Obedience.  
Otherwise it matters little, *whose Name* we are  
called by, or *whose Religion* we profess. For, un-  
less we bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance; God  
is able even of these Stones, sooner than of impen-  
itent and incorrigible Sinners, to raise up Children  
unto Abraham; and unto Christ.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
O F

St. *JAMES's Westminster,*

On Sunday, May 3, 1719.

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JOHN vi. 35.

*Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life.*

*He that cometh to me, shall never hunger;  
and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.*

**A**S in all Discourses whatsoever, there is no SERM.  
possibility of understanding the Sense of XII.  
what is spoken, without understanding the Lan-  
guage in which that Sense is delivered: So in  
Scripture particularly, unless Men attend to the  
Nature of the Expressions therein used, and  
consider the Figures of Speech, which at the  
Time when those Books were written, were as  
common and well-known, as modern Forms of



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speaking are at this Day: Unless this (I say) be considered, there is no Doctrine so absurd, but may be proved from the *Words* of Scripture, without Regard to the *Sense*; and no Doctrine so clear, but may be darkened with Scraps of Scripture-Expressions, applied contrary to the Design and Connexion of the whole Discourse. Thus, for Instance, God's *granting Repentance* to Sinners, that is, *granting* them the Favour of having their Repentance and Amendment accepted instead of perfect Obedience; has sometimes been understood in such a Manner, as if God *worked Repentance* in or upon them, as a *Workman* operates upon a *Machine*. Thus, God's declaring the *Christian Church*, instead of the *Jewish Church*, to be for the future his *elect People*; has been thought a Proof of his having chosen *particular Persons* absolutely and unconditionally to *Salvation*. Thus, the Promise of eternal Life to them that *believe*; though the Scripture in numberless Places declares, that thereby is meant the *Obedience* which proceedeth from Faith; has yet been perverted to signify mere *Credulity*, a mere *Profession* of Religion, mere *Zeal* for *particular Parties, Doctrines* or *Opinions*. And the *Hope of Pardon* to them that *truly repent* and *reform their Manners*, purchased by the Blood of Christ; has been turned into a *superstitious Reliance* upon the *Merits of Christ*, to supply the Want of *Repentance and Amendment of Life*. Again: The Power of *preaching the Gospel*, and the Command to *teach*

all

all Nations upon *what Terms* their Sins should be forgiven them; has been made a Foundation for a Pretence to a Power of forgiving Sins, upon other Terms than those of true Repentance and amendment of Life. And, to mention but one Instance more; our Saviour's styling himself the Bread of Life, giving his *Flesh for the Life of the World*, and saying concerning the Sacramental Memorial of his Death, *this is my Body*; though the very same Figure of Speech is used in numberless other Places of Scripture; though our Saviour himself expressly admonishes us in the Instance of *this very Figure*, Joh. vi. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing: the Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life*; yet how often have these Passages been alledged as Proofs of Transubstantiation, of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of the Adoration of the Host, and of other monstrous Confusions in the Worship of God! Against this Evil, there is no other possible Remedy, but studying the Scripture itself carefully and sincerely; in order to find out the real Sense and Meaning, instead of abusing the Words of it. Other Means of discovering the Truth in these Cases, there can be none. Tradition, is but a Fiction and a Spectre. Opinions of Men, are Nothing; being infinitely contradictory to each other; mutable as the Successions of Ages, and various as the different Climates and Nations of the Earth. Only with this Differenc; that at Rome a tyrannical Despise of Truth, and a Contempt

SERM. of *inquiring* after it, is greater than ever was in  
 XII. any other Place; greater in Degree, and larger  
 in Extent; more Authoritative, more wicked,  
 and more absurd. But if Men would use the  
*Scripture* as they do other Books, studying it  
 without Prejudice, looking for the Doctrine of  
 Christ in it, and not bringing with them their  
 Opinions *before* they read it; the *Sense* of Scrip-  
 ture would be found within itself. *Search the*  
*Scripture*, was our Saviour's Direction to the  
 Jews, *Joh. v. 39.* And the *Reason* is given by St.  
 Paul, *2 Tim. iii. 16.* 'Tis profitable for Doctrine, for  
 Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteous-  
 ness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly  
 furnished unto all good Works.

The Discourse of our Saviour in this *sixth*  
 Chapter of St. *John* whereof my Text is a Part;  
 is a most remarkable Instance and Proof of what  
 I have now said. Never was any Thing more  
 unreasonable than the Use which has sometimes  
 been made of such of our Lord's Expressions as  
 these which follow. *Labour for that MEAT,*  
*which endureth unto everlasting Life, v. 27.* The  
 BREAD of God, is he which cometh down from  
 Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World, v. 33. I  
 am the Bread of Life; He that cometh to me, shall  
 never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never  
 thirst, v. 35. The Bread that I will give, is my  
 Flesh which I will give for the Life of the World, v.  
 51. Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and  
 drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you, v. 53. And,

v. 58. *He that eateth of this Bread, shall live for e-* SEMR.  
*ver.* Nothing, I say, can be more unreasonable, XII.  
 than the Use which has been sometimes made,  
 and that by great Authorities too, of these Ex-  
 pressions of our Saviour. And yet if we look over  
 the whole Scripture, and consider the Phrases  
 of this Kind, that frequently occur in reading;  
 'twill be surprizing to observe, in how *usual* and  
*frequent*, in how *expressive* and *elegant*, in how *na-*  
*tural* and *obvious* a Manner, the very *same* Figure  
 of Speech is made use of, upon a *Multitude* of  
 Occasions. In the following Discourse therefore  
 upon these Words of our Lord, (*I am the Bread*  
*of Life: He that cometh to me shall never hunger;*  
*and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst:*) I  
 shall 1<sup>st</sup> endeavour, from the whole Tenour and  
 Phraseology of Scripture, to explain the Doctrine  
 here laid down; and to give an Account of the  
 particular Figure of Speech, in which it is ex-  
 pressed. And 2<sup>dly</sup>, I shall make some Observa-  
 tions thereupon, and Inferences from it.

I. In order to explain the Doctrine here laid  
 down, and to give an Account of the particular  
 Figure of Speech in which our Lord has ex-  
 pressed it; 'tis to be observed, that as the *Hap-*  
*piness of Heaven*, and the *final Favour of God*, is  
 by the inspired Writers represented under the  
 Character of *LIFE*, and *everlasting Life*; so, in  
 the *present Time* here upon *Earth*, the *State of*  
*Habit of Virtue*, is the *HEALTH* of the *Soul*;  
 And every Degree of *Instruction in the Knowledge*



SERM. of Truth, and every Act of Righteousness, every  
 XII. Degree of Improvement in virtuous Practice, is its  
 FOOD and NOURISHMENT. On the contrary, Sin is in Scripture spoken of as a Disease or Sickness; *If. i. 4. A sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity; the whole Head is SICK, and the whole Heart faint.* And a HABIT of Wickedness is elegantly set forth, as being, in a spiritual Sense, the DEATH of the Soul; *Eph. ii. 1. You who were DEAD in Trespasses and Sins.* A Reformation or Recovery from such a State, is described as a Resurrection from the Dead; *Eph. ii. 4. God who is rich in Mercy, even when we were dead in Sins, hath QUICKENED us* (that is, raised us to Life,) *together with Christ.* And every Degree of Improvement in the Knowledge of Truth and Right, is, as it were the Support, Nourishment, and Sustenance, of a rational and virtuous Mind. *Deut. xxxii. 2. My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew; as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass.* And *Job xxix. 22. Unto me Men gave ear; — and my Speech dropped upon them: They waited for me, as for the Rain; and they opened their Mouth wide as for the latter Rain.* To one who considers these and the like Expressions, nothing can be more natural and obvious than our Saviour's Way of speaking the Gospel after the same Manner: *Job. vii. 37. If any Man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink; If any Man has probity of Mind to receive Instruction, and is desirous to*  
 under-

understand the Truth, let him attend to the Doc-  
trine of the Gospel. The same Invitation is re-  
peated, *Rev. xxi. 6. xxii. 17. I will give unto him  
that is athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life  
freely. The Spirit and the Bride say, come, and let  
him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let  
him take the water of Life freely.* In the Prophet  
*Isaiab, ch. lv. 1. The same Figure is carried still  
further: Lo every one that thirsteth, come ye to the  
Waters;—come ye, buy, and eat; yea, buy Wine  
and Milk without Money, and without Price;—  
Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is  
good, and let your Soul delight itself in Fatness: In-  
cline your Ear, and come unto me; hear, and your  
Soul shall live.* And *Prov. ix. 3. Wisdom, (that  
is, the Doctrine of Virtue and true Religion, of  
the Fear of God and the Practice of Righteous-  
ness; this Wisdom) crieth upon the highest Places  
of the City: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:  
As for him that wanteth Understanding, she saith to  
him, come eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine  
which I have mingled: Forsake the Foolish and live;  
and go in the Way of Understanding.* There was  
no Jew in the Days of the Old Testament, but  
perfectly understood the Sense of these beautiful  
and expressive Figures of Speech; And they are  
now as obvious and as plain to be apprehended,  
(in all Cases where Prejudice and Interest do not  
interpose,) as the most modern Forms of speak-  
ing. Hence a sincere Desire of knowing and do-  
ing the Will of God, an unprejudiced Love of  
Truth,

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Truth, and an uncorrupt pursuing of what is right; is by our Saviour called *Hungring and Thirsting after Righteousness*, Matt. v. 6. And the Perfection of his own Practice, is most emphatically set forth in the following Expression, Job. iv. 34. *My MEAT*, saith he, *is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work*. In the Book of Job it is, ch. xxiii. 12. *I have not gone back from the Commandment of his Lips; I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food*. And in Jeremiah, thus, ch. xv. 16. *Thy Words were found, and I did EAT them; thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine Heart*. On the contrary, concerning those who delight in Wickedness and take Pleasure in Unrighteousness, 'tis affirmed in Scripture, that *the Soul of the Transgressor EATETH violence, and DRINKETH up Scorning (or Iniquity) like Water*. Job xxxiv. 7. xv. 16. Prov. xiii. 2. And any peculiar extraordinary Corruption in the Doctrine or general Practice of any particular Party of Men, is styled the *Leaven* of those Men, or of that Vice: Matt. xvi. 11, 12. *I spake not to you concerning BREAD, that ye should beware of the LEAVEN of the Pharisees,—but of the DOCTRINE of the Pharisees, which (Luke xiii. 1.) is Hypocrisy*. And 1 Cor. v. 8. *Not with the LEAVEN of Malice and Wickedness, but with the UNLEAVENED BREAD of Sincerity and Truth*. By the same Figure of Speech, the *Elements* or the first plain and fundamental Principles or Instructions of Christianity,

*stianity*, are styled the *sincere MILK of the Word*, SERM.  
 1 Pet. ii. 2. and 1 Cor. iii. 2. And a *more perfect* or XII.  
*improved Knowledge in the Doctrines of the*  
*Gospel*, is, according to St. Paul's Description,  
*strong MEAT belonging to them that are of full*  
*Age, even those who by Reason of Use have their*  
*Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil.* Heb.  
 v. 14. The *imbibing, digesting, and practising*  
 these Precepts of true Religion, is, in our Sa-  
 viour's Language, the *MEAT which endureth*  
*unto everlasting Life*, Joh. vi. 27. And ch. iv.  
 14. 'tis the *WATER*, which whosoever drinketh  
 of, shall never thirst; but, it shall be in him a *Well*  
*of Water, springing up into everlasting Life.* To  
 Persons not conversant in the Scripture-Lan-  
 guage, 'tis no wonder that such Phrases as these,  
 seem strange and not easy to be understood. But  
 from the Passages before-cited out of the Old  
 Testament, 'tis apparent they were very common  
 Figures of Speech among the Jews; and conse-  
 quently ought to be interpreted according to  
 that Analogy. In the Book of Ecclesiasticus,  
 particularly, there is a Passage which gives sin-  
 gular Light to the whole Discourse of our Sa-  
 viour, whereof my Text is a Part: ch. xxiv. 19:  
 Wisdom is introduced, saying, *Come unto me,*  
*all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with*  
*my Fruits. For my Memorial is sweeter than Ho-*  
*ney, and mine Inheritance than the Honey-Comb.*  
*They that EAT me, shall yet be Hungry; and they*  
*that DRINK me, shall yet be thirsty. He that*  
 obeyeth



SERM. obeyeth me, shall never be confounded; and they

XII. *that work by me, shall not do amiss. All these Things are the Book of the Covenant of the most high God. The Phrases; they that eat me, shall yet be hungry; and they that drink me, shall yet be thirsty; signify in a lively and most elegant Manner of Expression, that the Pleasure arising from the Knowledge of Truth and from the Practice of Virtue, is a Pleasure always New, always Satisfying, and of which a Man can never be Weary. The Phrase used by our Saviour in the Text, (he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst); though it be very different in the Construction; yet the Allusion is plainly the very same, and the Sense not at all unlike: Whosoever embraceth my Doctrine, and obeys my Instructions, shall never WANT any Thing necessary to his eternal Happiness; seeing he has the Means which will more certainly support him unto everlasting Life, than Meat and Drink maintains and nourishes the Body in this mortal State.*

This being once carefully observed, there remains no further Difficulty in understanding our Saviour's whole Discourse thro' this Chapter. His calling himself the *Bread of Life* in the Text, and in ver. 48; the *living Bread*, ver. 51. and the *Bread which came down from Heaven*, ver. 50 and 58; plainly signifies this only; that the Belief and consequent Practice of the Doctrine of the Gospel, is the Support and Preserver of the Soul

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Soul unto eternal Life. His saying, *ver. 57.* *He that EATETH me, shall live by me;* is clearly explained by the Words of Wisdom, *Eccl. xxiv. 21.* *They that EAT me, shall yet be hungry:* And that by our Lord's own Words in the Text, *He that COMETH to me, shall never hunger;* and *he that BELIEVETH on me, shall never thirst:* Where the Words, *coming to him* and *believing on him*, appear evidently, by the Words *hunger* and *thirst*, with which they are joined, to be explicatory of what in the 57th verse is styled *Eating*. And his explaining himself, *ver. 29, 40, and 47,* manifestly shows the same Thing: *This (says he) is the Work of God, that ye BELIEVE on him whom he has sent: — This is the Will of them that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and BELIEVETH on him, may have everlasting Life: Verily I say unto you, he that BELIEVETH on me, hath everlasting Life; I am that Bread of Life.* There remains only one Phrase more in this Chapter, wherein the same Figure of Speech is carried still further; our Lord in the 51st and 53d and following Verses, setting forth the same Thing under the still higher Figure of *eating his Flesh* and *drinking his Blood*, which, in the Text, and in several Verses of this Chapter, he had before expressed by styling himself *The Bread of Life*. But this also, when that which has been already said be well understood, will have no great Difficulty in it. For as, in the 15th Chapter of this Gospel, our Lord

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expresses the spiritual Union between him and his Disciples in the following Manner, *ver. 5. I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him; the same bringeth forth much Fruit*: And as St. Paul without any Danger of being misunderstood, sets forth the same Notion still more sublimely thus, *Eph. v. 30. We are Members of his Body, of his Flesh and of his Bones*: So in the Place before us, after our Lord's styling himself the *Bread of Life*, in the same Sense as *Wisdom* in the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* says concerning herself, *They that EAT me, shall yet be hungry*; there cannot, without great Perverseness, be put a wrong Sense upon what he adds, *ver. 56. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*. For, why should not what our Lord calls *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood*, be as easily understood of our *imbibing and digesting* his Doctrine, converting it by Way of spiritual Nourishment into the very Habit of our Mind, and into the Practice of our Lives; as St. Paul is by all Men, even of the meanest Capacities, understood without any difficulty to speak in a figurative Sense, when he says of all good Christians, that they are *Members of Christ's Body, of his Flesh and of his Bones*?

II. Having thus from the whole Tenour and Phraseology of Scripture, explained the Doctrine laid down in the Text, and given an Account of the particular Figure of Speech wherein it is expressed:

pressed: It remains in the *second* Place, that I SERM.  
XII.  
briefly make some Observations thereupon, and  
Inferences from it. And 

1<sup>st</sup>. From what has been said, it appears, that in this whole Discourse of our Saviour in *this* sixth Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel, there is no Mention at all made of the *Eucharist* or *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. The Discourse was spoken by our Saviour *long before* the Institution of that Sacrament: And therefore it could never have been applied by any to that Subject, had they not thought the Phrases of *eating his Flesh* and *drinking his Blood*, incapable of being explained to any other Sense. But from the many Passages both of the Old and New Testament, which I have now alledged to this Purpose, 'tis evident that those Phrases, in the *Jewish* Language and Manner of speaking, do very easily signify, the *receiving* and *imbibing*, the *digesting* and *practising* a *Doctrine*: And that the only Reason why our Lord was misunderstood by many that heard him, was that Dullness in some, and that *Perverseness* in others arising from unreasonable *Prejudices*, which we find him so often complaining of in the Gospel.

2<sup>dly</sup>. If the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, is not at all spoken of in *this Chapter*: then *much less* can any Argument be drawn from any Expression therein, in Favour of the *Romish* Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. Receiving and *imbibing*, *digesting* and *practising* his *Doctrine*; is  
what



SER. M. what our Lord here calls, *eating his Flesh* and  
 XII. *drinking his Blood*. And 'tis called so by the  
 like Figure of Speech, (though without any Re-  
 ference to each other in this Place,) as is used  
 indeed in the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*,  
 and in that of *Baptism* too. The *Bread* and  
*Wine*, are not themselves literally the *Body* and  
*Blood of Christ*; but the *inward* Thing signified  
 by those *outward* Symbols, is the *Body and Blood*  
*of Christ*: Just, as in the Sacrament of *Baptism*,  
*the being immersed in Water*, is not itself the  
*Death and Burial of Christ*, but only an *outward*  
*Sign*; the *inward* Thing signified thereby, is *the*  
*being buried with Christ in his Death*. And the  
*Body and Blood of Christ*, is *verily and indeed taken*  
*and received* by the Faithful in the *Lord's Sup-*  
*per*; just in the same Manner, as Persons bap-  
 tised do *verily and indeed die and are buried with*  
*Christ*. No Man ever was so absurd, as to un-  
 derstand the *one* literally; and there is no more  
 Reason to understand the *other* so: But by *both*,  
 Men are intitled, if they be worthy Receivers,  
 to the spiritual Benefits purchased by *Christ's*  
*Death*.

3dly. From hence we may learn *in general*,  
 how to understand many *other* metaphorical Ex-  
 pressions in Scripture. After the same Manner  
 of speaking, as *Christ* is here styled the  
*BREAD of Life*; he is elsewhere styled the  
*WAY and the Life*, the *RESURRECTION*  
*and the Life*, the *Door* and the *Vine*. He is call-  
 ed

ed the *Word* and the *Wisdom*, and the *Power* of S B R M.  
 GOD; and he is called *the Righteousness* (or XII.  
*Justification*) of MEN. He and the Father, are  
 affirmed to be *one*; and of Paul and Apollos, 'tis  
 said, *He that planteth, and he that watereth, are*  
*one*. The *Eucharist* is spoken of, as a *Sacrifice*;  
 and *Praise* is expressly called a *Sacrifice*; and the  
*Bodies* of Christians are styled *holy and living Sa-*  
*crifices*: For *no other* Reason, but because these  
 Things, in the *Christian* Institution, succeeded in  
 the *Place* of the *Sacrifices* which had been offer-  
 ed among the *Jews*. And therefore when some  
 ancient Christian Writers style the *Eucharist* an  
*unbloody Sacrifice*; modern Writers who under-  
 stand this Phrase in a *literal* Sense, are just as  
 absurd, as if they should understand St. Paul lite-  
 rally when he calls Christians *The CIRCUMCI-*  
*SION without Hands*; by which he plainly  
 means nothing more, but that the *Christian*  
*Church* succeeded in the *Place* of the *Jewish*,  
 who had in the *literal* Sense been styled *the Cir-*  
*cumcision*. And by the *same* Figure of Speech;  
 because God who had formerly chosen *Jerusa-*  
*lem* to place his Name there, has now declared  
 that he will be worshipped in *all Places* alike;  
 therefore the whole World has sometimes been  
 elegantly styled, *The TEMPLE* of God; And  
*every Man*, and *every moral Duty*, is a *Sacrifice*  
 acceptable to him.

4. *Lastly*: Since these and the like *figurative*  
*Expressions*, contain *always* in them a *moral*

SERM. Meaning and Signification, we ought carefully  
 XII. to observe, that in *this their moral Meaning* only,  
 Joh. vi. 63. can they ever be of any *Use* to us. *The Flesh,*  
*saith our blessed Saviour, profiteth nothing; the*  
*Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and*  
*they are Life.* The Participation of the *Sacra-*  
*ment,* without true *Faith*; is *Bread,* without the  
*Body of Christ.* *Faith* itself, without *Obedience*;  
 is (as St. *James* expresses it,) a *Body without Soul*  
*or Life.* *Relying on the Merits of Christ,* without  
*doing the Will of his Father which is in Heaven;*  
 can be of no more *Use* to us, than the *Death of*  
*Christ* would have been, if there had never been  
 any *Resurrection.* All great Corruptions of Re-  
 ligion in all Ages, have arisen by separating  
 the Letter from the Spirit; and in amending this  
 Fault, lies the principal Efficacy of true Virtue  
 and Goodness.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
PARISH-CHURCH  
O F

St. James's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 15, 1723.

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ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath  
made Man upright; but they have sought  
out many Inventions.*

'TIS, not only at this Day, the greatest and  
most difficult Question among *Christians*;  
but it was of old among the *Jews* under the  
Law; and, beyond *that*, even among the wiser  
*Heathens* also, under the State of *Nature*; How  
*Sin and Misery* came first into the *World*: How  
*Man*, whose rational Faculties seem naturally to  
lead him to discern and choose what is good;

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XIII.



SERM. yet in Event for the greater Part has his Under-  
 XIII. standing so blinded and apt to be deceived, his  
 Will so biassed and inclined to Evil, his Appetites so corrupt and perpetually tempting him to forbidden Objects; his Passions so ungovernable, and unwilling to submit to Reason; that if a Judgment was to be made, not from the *Faculties* of Men, but from their *Actions* only; if we were to take our Estimate, not from the Obligations of our *Nature*, but from the Experience of Men's *Practice*; it might be imagined that, not *Virtue* but *Vice*, was natural to Mankind, and the proper Effect of their original Composition. For otherwise; if *originally* God made Men *upright*, and *Virtue* was naturally most agreeable to their Frame; how then was it *possible* (will it be obvious to ask,) that they could almost universally *seek out* so many evil *Inventions*? And if the *Inventions* they have sought out, are so many and so evil, that they can hardly be conceived to arise but from something faulty in their very *Nature*; how then can it be comprehended, that God nevertheless created them *originally upright*? If God be perfectly good, (as perfect Goodness is of necessity included in the very Notion of God;) how is it possible that any of the Works of his Hands, should become so *evil*? And if the *Inventions* of Men be so *evil*, as Experience too manifestly declares them to be; how is this reconcileable with a firm Belief, that yet God, who made them, is per-

perfectly good? When we begin with consulting our *natural Notions of God*, Reason and Demonstration represent him to us of necessity so entirely and absolutely good, that we are apt to expect, *whatever* is the Product of such a Cause; *whatever* is the Workmanship of such an Author, should have impressed upon it no obscure Image, should carry with it no small Resemblance, of the Perfections of his Maker. On the *other* Hand, when we begin with considering Things as *in Fact* they are in the World, and observe the extreme Wickedness of the greater Part of Mankind; 'tis then very hard to apprehend, how so very *frail* and *sinful* a Creature, could come out of the Hands of an All-merciful and good *God*. Too hard was this Speculation, for the Philosophy of the heathen World; and it drove many of their Disputants to argue themselves into an Imagination of an irresistible *evil* Cause, in perfect Opposition to, and of equal Power with, the Supreme Good. But the Impossibility of two Supreme Causes, being demonstratively apparent; Others, with much greater and better Reason, resolved all the Evil and all the Wickedness in the World, into the *free Choice* and *voluntary* Corruption of Men, whose Nature God originally had created good. And yet even still a Difficulty remained, *whence* it came to pass, that tho' the *Nature* of Man, as of God's creating, had indeed nothing *actually* in it but good; yet it should be so *frail* and *fallible*,

S E R M. libe, so *prone* to evil, and so *apt* to be seduced,  
 XIII. as by Experience it was found to be. The true  
 ~~~~~ Occasion of this, is *briefly intimated* to us in the  
 sacred Writings, in the History of the *Fall of*  
*Man*. And evidently there is nothing any Way  
 inconsistent with the divine Goodness in *this*,  
 that God, whose inexhaustible Wisdom and  
 Power shows forth itself most properly in  
 producing a never-failing variety of Crea-  
 tures of different Natures, Capacities, and Fa-  
 culties; should suffer the *Posterity of Adam*,  
 to be of a more frail and fallible Nature, more  
 subject to Temptation and more prone to be  
 deceived, than they would otherwise have been;  
 after their first Parent had forfeited those Advan-  
 tageous Circumstances of his first Creation, to  
 which he had *originally* no more Right, (but by  
 the free Gift and mere good Pleasure of God,)   
 then he had to the Powers and Perfections of an  
*Angel*. And *Adam* might with as just Reason  
 have complained against the Goodness of God,  
 because he was not created an *Angel in Heaven*;  
 as *we* can, for our not being born in *Paradise*.  
 Nor is it more inconsistent with the divine  
 Goodness, to suffer *us*, in Consequence of *his*  
 introducing Sin into the World to become *more*  
 frail and fallible, *more* peaceable and obnoxious  
 to Temptation, than *he* at first was; than it was  
 inconsistent with the same Goodness, to make  
*him*, by the *original* Condition of his Creation,  
 subject to Temptation and to Sin *at all*. In a



Word: Either we must be so unreasonable as to S E R M. assert, that the Goodness of God cannot allow XIII. him to make *any* Creature at all; because no Creature can be originally and absolutely incapable of Sinning: Or else, by the same Reason he may likewise, reconcileably with his Goodness, make all *Variety* of Creatures, in all the various Degrees of Frailty and Liableness to Temptation: Always *excepting* that, of being *necessarily* and *unavoidably* Wicked and Miserable; and always *supposing*, that God will finally judge with perfect Equity these *frail* Beings, each of them *according to what he has, and not according to what he has not.* And still much less inconsistent will it be with the same divine Goodness, to permit the Posterity of a sinful and depraved Creature, to continue by *natural Consequence* in a *lower* and *more obnoxious* Rank of Beings, than possibly they would have been placed in, had no such Depravation been introduced either by our *first Parent*, or by *any of his Successors.*

*Some Writers* have indeed, without sufficient Warrant from Scripture, carried this Matter further; and have asserted that for the Sin of *Adam*, not only himself and his Posterity were made subject to *Death*, and to all the *Miseries of this mortal Life*, consequent upon the Earth's being cursed for his Sake; and that they became very *weak* and *frail*, exposed to *more* Temptations, and *more* prone to Sin; but that moreover all



SERM. Mankind, for that *one* Transgression of their  
 XIII. Forefather, were actually liable to be condemned  
 to the *Punishment of eternal Torments*; and were  
 by *Nature* so *Wicked* and so entirely indisposed to  
 all Good, that the Will of Man had thencefor-  
 ward no more Liberty to choose what was Right,  
 than a dead Man has Power to restore himself  
 to Life. But these Things, the Scripture does  
 not teach how great soever it represents the  
 Depravity of Human Nature. And indeed, to  
 suppose that *God himself* sends Men into the  
 World, under an absolute *Necessity* in their very  
 Nature, of being *Wicked and Miserable*; is not  
 much better, than what some Heathens imagin-  
 ed, of their being made so by the Power of an  
 opposite supreme *evil Principle*. How much  
 more wise and reasonable is the Determination  
 of *Solomon* in the Text: Who in Matters of Dif-  
 ficulty and deep Inquiry, in Things wherein 'tis  
 impossible for the narrow Understanding of  
 short-sighted Mortals to discover the whole Or-  
 der and Method, the Occasion and Reason of  
 many of the divine Proceedings; advises us to  
*separate the certain from the Uncertain*; to ad-  
 here to what we certainly know to be true, and  
 not be moved from it by the Uncertainty of  
 what we cannot discover! For so he concludes  
 a difficult and profound Inquiry; *Lo, this only*  
*have I found.*

He had been in vain searching into the Depths  
 of Providence, and attempting to comprehend  
 the

the Counsel of the most High. And, indeed, SERM. XIII.  
 what Wonder is it, that Man, who sees so *small*  
*a Portion* of the Works of God from the Beginning to the End, should not be able to comprehend the Wisdom of the *Whole*? *All this*, says he, *have I proved by Wisdom*, ver. 23. *I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me: That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?* And then he concludes in the Words of the Text; *Lo, this only have I found.*

Among the Things impossible to be discovered by human Understanding, there is still always *something* certain and to be depended upon; *something*, in which a rational Person may acquiesce and rest satisfied; *something* on which he may with Confidence fix his Foot, *Lo, this have I found.*

The *particular* Inquiry, upon Occasion of which the wise Man makes this Conclusion, was the Consideration of the Difficulty I now mentioned; viz. What might be the *Reason* of the exceeding great Depravity and Corruption of Human Nature; ver. 25. *I applied mine Heart to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom, and the Reason of Things, and to know the WICKEDNESS of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madnes.* And the Result was: *Lo, This only have I found; that God hath made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

In the Words, we may observe these two Things. 1<sup>st</sup>. A general Direction or Intimation,  
 on,

SERM. on, that in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever,  
 XIII. we ought to *separate* what is *certain*, from that  
 which is *uncertain*: And never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one Truth*, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *All*. *Lo, THIS ONLY have I found.* 2dly. An *Application* of this general Direction, to that great Question in *particular*; whence the *Corruption* and *Depravity* of *Human Nature* arises. *This have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.*

*First*, Here is a general Direction or Intimation; that in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to *separate* what is *certain*, from that which is *uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one Truth*, that our Faculties have not inabled us to discover *All*. *Lo, This only have I found.* The Works of God, are infinite and boundless; and the Understanding of Man is limited and finite. We cannot therefore comprehend the *whole* Works of God, because our Understandings are *not infinite*; and yet, because we *have* Understanding given us, therefore we *ought* to endeavour to understand them *in Part*. The Scripture frequently declares the Incomprehensibleness of the Works of God: And no where more emphatically, than in this Book of *Ecclesiastes*, Ch. iii. v. 11. *He has made every Thing beautiful in his Time; also he has set the World in their Heart; so that no Man can find out the Work that God maketh, from the Beginning*



to the End. Again, *ch. viii. 17.* Then I beheld SERM.  
all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out XIII.  
the Work that is done under the Sun; because though  
a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it;  
yea further, though a wise Man think to know it,  
yet shall he not be able to find it. And *ch. ix. 5.*  
As thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit,  
nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that  
is with Child; even so thou knowest not the Works  
of God, who maketh all. Nevertheless, both by  
Reason and Scripture we are directed to study the  
Works of God; that, by what we can discover,  
we may learn to admire and adore his Wisdom  
in what we cannot discover; and by what we are  
able to understand, be convinced of the Excel-  
lency of the Things that exceed our Compre-  
hension.

To instance in *Particulars.* In *what Manner*  
this beautiful Fabrick of the World was made,  
and how the several Parts of it in particular were  
formed; the greatest Philosophers upon Earth  
have by no Means been able to discover. *This on-*  
*ly have they found,* that these Things are evident-  
ly the Works of an *intelligent* and *powerful* Cause,  
and cannot possibly be the Effects either of  
*Chance* or of *Necessity*.

In *what Manner* the several Steps of Provi-  
dence in the Government of the World, shall fi-  
nally be cleared, has been a Thing too hard for  
the wisest of Men to comprehend, and a Depth  
inscrutable to the most enlarged Understandings.

*This*



SER.M. *This only*, are they well assured of; that *the Judge*  
 {XIII.} *of all the Earth, will do what is right*; will deal  
 equitably with all Persons, according to their  
 respective Circumstances; and that, at last, *he*  
*will conspicuously be justified in his Saying, and be*  
*clear when he is judged.*

*In what particular Manner God's Fore-determi-  
 nation of many Events, and his Fore-knowledge of*  
*all, is reconcileable with that Liberty of human*  
*Actions, without which there could be no Reli-*  
*gion, no Punishment, no Reward; is a Secret*  
*we shall then perhaps clearly and thoroughly*  
*understand, when the Books of Providence shall*  
*be laid open, and the Secrets of all Hearts shall be*  
*disclosed; when the Lord shall come with ten thou-*  
*sands of his Saints, not only to execute Judgment*  
*upon Men, but also to convince (as St. Jude ex-*  
*presses it,) that is, to satisfy, in their own Rea-*  
*son and Consciences, all that are ungodly among*  
*them, of their ungodly Deeds which they have un-*  
*godly committed, and of all their hard Speeches*  
*which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him. In*  
*the mean Time, this only do we know for cer-*  
*tain, and in this may we with Assurance acqui-*  
*esce, that God made not Death, neither hath he*  
*Pleasure in the Destruction of the Living; nor doth*  
*he, by any absolute Predetermination, bring*  
*Wickedness and Misery necessarily upon any*  
*Man; but ungodly Men with their own Words and*  
*Works call it upon them.*

Again:

Again: *Wherein the Nature and Dignity of the Person of Christ* (beyond what God in Scripture has thought fit to reveal to us) precisely consists, and in *what particular Manner* those supereminent Attributes, which the Scripture ascribes to him, are communicated to him from the Father; is what neither Men nor Angels can perfectly understand. *This only* may Christians of *all Capacities* be assured of, and may with Confidence depend upon it; that whosoever embraces the *Doctrine* which our Saviour taught, and obeys the *Laws* which he has delivered; and, in order to obtain Remission of past Sins, makes constant *Application to God in HIS Name* and through his Intercession, as being our *alone Mediator* with the Father; and lives in constant Expectation of his appearing finally as our *Saviour and Judge*, to complete our Reconciliation in the Day of Redemption, and to reward every Man according as his Work shall be: Whosoever (I say) heartily professes this Faith, and perseveres in this *Practice* by patient Continuance in well-doing; though he enters into *no* difficult Speculations, and confines his Thoughts entirely to what he clearly understands; yet *this* he may be assured of, and abundantly sufficient it is, if but *this only* he can find; that (according to the gracious Terms of the Gospel-Covenant) he shall certainly be Partaker of the Salvation purchased by the Son of God, *manifested in the Flesh*.

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XIII.

*Lastly*; To give but one Instance more, (which is *that* alluded to by *Solomon* in the *Text*;) How it comes to pass, that in a World created by infinite *Goodness*, and governed by the Providence of the same *good God*, yet *Wickedness* should abound so universally as it does; and our first Parents introducing Sin into the World, should be permitted to have so great and lasting an Effect, that many Men *seem* as it were *originally* and *almost naturally* to have strong Inclinations to Vice; though something has already been offered, and more will be said in the following Part of this Discourse, to explain this Difficulty in some Measure; yet, unless we knew the *whole Series* of Providence from the Beginning to the End, from the Creation of the Universe to the final Consummation of all Things; 'tis no great Wonder we should not fully understand the whole Counsel of God, nor be able, in this *very short* and imperfect State, to search out to the Bottom so unfathomable a Depth. *This only* do we find demonstrably certain; as being both clear in the *Reason* of Things, and most expressly moreover declared in *Scripture*; (and abundantly sufficient it is, for our present Satisfaction;) that, whatever Difficulties may *now* arise in this Matter, yet *in the End* it shall appear to the Conviction of Sinners, (so that every *Mouth shall be stopped* before God; stopped not by *Power*, but by the *Reason of the Case*; and every *Tongue* shall confess his Justice,) that *God did make Man upright*; only *they themselves have sought out many Inventions*.

In



In these and numberless other Instances, appears the Reasonableness of the *general* Direction or Intimation given us in the Text; that, in *all Questions of Difficulty* whatsoever, we ought to separate what is *certain* from that which is *uncertain*; and never think it a sufficient Reason to depart from *one* Truth, that our Faculties have not enabled us to discover *all*. *Lo, this only have I found.*

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In *finite* Understandings, which are not capable of comprehending *all* Knowledge, nor of discovering *all* Truth; 'tis the highest Improvement they can arrive to, and deserving the greatest Commendation, to be able rightly to distinguish what they *can*, from what they *cannot* discover; and so to rest satisfied and acquiesce in what they find, as not to entertain any Doubt concerning the Certainty of *one* Truth, because of the Uncertainty they chance to meet with in *another*.

If we find by strong and undeniable Arguments; that the beautiful *Order* of the several Parts of the World, could not possibly arise from *Chance*; nor the infinite *Variety* of Things therein, from blind and unintelligent *Necessity*; nor the exquisite *Fitness* wherewith every Thing is adapted to its proper End, from any *other Cause* than the Will and free Operation of an All-powerful and All-wise Being; Is not *this* sufficient Satisfaction to a reasonable Mind, though he cannot comprehend the *Manner how* each particular



SERM. ticular was formed? Or, because there are *some*  
 XIII. Things, which, for *what End* they were made,  
 our narrow Understandings cannot discover; is  
 there *therefore* from thence any Colour of Reason  
 to doubt, whether any Thing was made for *any*  
*End at all.*

In like Manner, if we find by evident Demonstration, that he who in the Beginning *made* the World by his *Power*, cannot but *govern* it unto the End by his *Providence*; is not *this* sufficient to satisfy a rational Person, tho' he cannot at present account for *all* its Proceedings? Or, is it in any Degree reasonable, because the Counsels of a great Prince *before* they are entirely put in Execution, are above the Comprehension of a mean Person; that *therefore* that mean Person should conclude the Counsels of the Prince to have *no Wisdom* in them, or should doubt whether he had *any Counsels* or *Designs* at all.

Again: If we are by Experience as much assured of the *Liberty* of our *Wills*, as we are of the *Truth* of our *Understandings*, or the *Reality* of our *Senses* themselves; and have the same Thing moreover confirmed to us, by all the *Promises* and all the *Threatnings* of God; and that the divine *Fore-knowledge* is no *Fore-determination* of our *Actions*, but only an *unerring Judgment*, or such a *Kind* of *Prescience* (whatever *that* be,) as is consistent with *Liberty*, and necessarily *presupposes* the *Liberty* of those *Actions* which are foreknown to be free; have we not abundantly wherein to acquiesce,

quiesce, tho' we know not the particular Manner S E R M.  
 of the divine *Fore-knowledge*? Or, because there XIII.  
 is some *Uncertainty* in the *particular Manner* of  
 reconciling it with human Liberty, is there *there-*  
*fore* any Reason to call in Question the *Thing it-*  
*self*, which of all others is the most absolutely  
*certain*? and pretend to doubt whether we have *any*  
 Liberty, that is, whether there be *any* such Thing  
 as *Religion*, any such Thing as *Reason*, any *Un-*  
*derstanding* in Man, or any *Power of acting* at all?

Further: If we are assured by a clear and dis-  
 tinct Revelation, that God has sent his *Son* into  
 the World, to teach us our Duty, and set us an  
 Example of practising it; to *die for the Sins*, and  
*rise again for the Justification*, of all who shall *es-*  
*fectually* repent and *reform their Manners*; to  
 make Intercession for us at present, and bring us  
 hereafter unto Glory: Is not *this* sufficient to all  
 the Purposes of Religion and Happiness, tho'  
 we understand not the *Manner* of his *Generation*  
 from the Beginning, nor *what* the Particulars of  
*that Glory* were, *which he had with the Father be-*  
*fore the World was*? Or, because reasonable Men  
 do not take upon them to *define*, (as the *School-*  
*men* have *presumptuously* done,) *how* and *in what*  
*particular Manner* our Lord was before all Ages  
*the Brightness of his Father's Glory and the express*  
*Image of his Person*; is there *therefore* any Reason  
 to doubt, whether we have any *Saviour*, any *Re-*  
*ligion*, any *Hopes of Happiness* at all?

SERM. Lastly ; If it be clearly demonstrable by right  
 XIII. Reason, and moreover asserted in express Words  
 of Scripture, *that God has made Man upright, but they themselves have sought out many Inventions :* Have we not wherein to acquiesce, tho' *this only* be all that we *have found* ; and we do not perhaps distinctly understand the Reason, *why* the All-wise Governour of the World, has thought fit to permit Men thus to corrupt themselves ? And this brings me to the

Second Particular I propos'd to speak to ; namely, the Application of the *general direction* I have been hitherto discoursing upon, to that great Question *in particular, whence* the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises. *Lo, this only have I found, that God has made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.* But the Time not permitting to enter upon this, I shall conclude at present with two very brief *Inferences* from what has been already said.

The *FIRST* is ; that the Rule laid down in the foregoing Discourse, extends only to the *express Revelations* of God, and not to any Doctrines or explications of Men.

The *SECOND* is ; that from what has been said, we may see the great Unreasonableness of *Scepticism* in Matters of Religion ; and the Absurdity of those, who from the *Uncertainty* of some Questions of great *Difficulty* and of *small Consequence*, would draw Reasons for doubting in Matters of the *greatest Certainty* and of the *utmost Importance*

portance. In Questions of *Natural Philosophy*, SERM.  
Men do not so argue: In the Management of **XIII.**  
*Worldly Affairs*, they do not so act; but *separate*  
always what is *certain*, from that which is *uncertain*: And the *uncertainty* of one Thing, does not hinder them from relying, in all the Business of Life, upon the unquestionable *Certainty* of another. There is the same, nay much stronger Reason, why they should act in like manner in Matters of *Religion*: Where that which is of the greatest *Importance*, is always of the greatest *Certainty*; and whatever is *less certain* and more difficult to be understood, is also always proportionably of *less Moment*. We have upon this Head, the final Advice of *Job*, and the last and most considerate Words of *Solomon*. The former of whom, concludes his Discourse concerning the uncertainty of all *other Knowledge*, with this admirable Reflection, *Job xxviii. 28. And unto Man be said; the Fear of the Lord, That is Wisdom: and to depart from Evil, is Understanding.* The latter having in a whole Book elegantly represented the Confusion and Uncertainty of all human Affairs, sums up his whole Discourse in this wise Admonition, *Eccles. xii. 13. Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole, the whole Duty and the whole Happiness, of Man.*



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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

P A R I S H - C H U R C H

O F

St. James's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 22, 1723.

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ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath  
made Man upright; but they have sought  
out many Inventions.*

S E R M.  
XIV. **T**HE Book of Ecclesiastes is a Collection of  
the general Conclusions drawn by Solomon,  
from his Observations upon Human Nature, and  
on the State of the World. He was a Person, of  
whom the Scripture says, that God gave him Wis-  
dom and Understanding exceeding much; such as none  
of the Kings had, that were before him; neither shall  
there any after him, have the like; 1 Kings iv. 29.  
and 2 Chron. i. 12. His own Experience of all  
the

the Injoyments of Life, and his high Station in SERM.  
 the World, gave him the greatest Opportunities, XIV.  
 and the largest Field, to improve his Understanding by the *most general Observations*; and to make the truest Judgment of the *real Value*, of every Thing in the World. *I the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem; and I gave my Heart to seek and search out by Wisdom, concerning all Things that are done under Heaven, ch. i. ver. 12. I communed with mine own Heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great Estate, and have gotten more Wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my Heart had great Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge; and I gave my Heart to know Wisdom, and to know Madnes and Folly, ver. 16.* The Result of all was, that he found every Thing to be *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit*. That, even in *Wisdom* itself, is much Grief; and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow. That Laughter and Joy, is Madnes; and Mirth, what Benefit is there in it? That, when Goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the Owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their Eyes? That he considered all the Oppressions that are done under the Sun; and behold, the Tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no Comforter; and on the Side of their Oppressors was Power, but they had no Comforter. That, with Respect to the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, *MAN* also knoweth not his Time; but as the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in a Snare, so

SERM. are the Sons of Men snared in an evil Time, when it  
 XIV. falleth suddenly upon them. That, notwithstanding  
 this, yet the Hearts of the Sons of Men were full of  
 evil; and Madnes is in their Heart while they live;  
 and after that they go to the dead. That he applied  
 his Heart to know and to search out the REASON  
 of these Things; and to know the Wickedness of Fol-  
 ly, even of Foolishness and Madnes. That all these  
 Things he proved by Wisdom, and said he would be  
 wise, but it was far from him; for, that which is  
 far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?  
 The Particulars were impossible even for his Un-  
 derstanding to discover. But, in general, this he  
 was sure of, that God was true, tho' every Man  
 was a Liar; that God was righteous in all his  
 Ways, and Holy in all his Works; and Man, the  
 Cause of all his own Misery. Lo, this only have  
 I found, that God has made Man upright, but they  
 have sought out many Inventions.

In the Words, I have observed these two Par-  
 ticulars. 1st, A general Direction, or Intimation;  
 that in all Questions of Difficulty whatsoever, we  
 ought always to separate what is Certain, from  
 that which is Uncertain; and never look upon it  
 as a sufficient Reason to depart from One Truth,  
 that our Faculties do not enable us to discover  
 All. Lo, This only have I found. 2dly, An Ap-  
 plication of this general Direction, to That great  
 Question in particular, Whence the Corruption and  
 Depravity of Human Nature arises. This only  
 have

have I found, that God has made Man upright, but SERM.  
XIV.  
they have sought out many Inventions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> of these, I have already discoursed upon. It remains that I consider at this Time, (2<sup>dly</sup>) the Application the Wise man makes of this general Direction, to That great Question in particular, *Whence the Corruption and Depravity of Human Nature arises.* This only have I found, that God has made Man Upright, but they have sought out many Inventions. Now there is in this, as in most other Questions, something that is Uncertain and Difficult to be explained; something that the Understanding even of Solomon himself could not attain to; something, that 'tis not possible for us to find out, nor needful for us to desire to know; something, that is to be resolved perhaps into the mere good pleasure of God; or rather into Reasons (for God does nothing without Reason,) which We at present are not at all capable of judging of; why God in his infinite Wisdom thought fit, among that immense and boundless Variety of his Works to make Some Creatures of such a particular degree of Capacity and Understanding, so frail, so fallible, so liable to be seduced and corrupted, as Mankind is. To this part of the Question 'tis sufficient to reply with the Apostle; *Shall the Thing formed, say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the Clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* That is, Hath not God a Right



SERMON. to make what Variety of Creatures, and of what  
 XIV. different Capacities, he pleases? But then there  
 is also *on the other hand* something in the Same  
 Question that is very *Certain*, something that is  
*infallibly true* and may be depended upon, some-  
 thing in which a reasonable Mind may *acquiesce*  
 and rest satisfied; *viz.* that though God *has* in-  
 deed made us *frail and fallible*, yet he has not  
 made us *necessarily Wicked*; He has made us, sub-  
 ject and liable to *Temptation*, but not of necessity  
 Slaves to *Sin*. That we are *Capable* of Corrupt-  
 ing ourselves, is indeed the Consequence of that  
 Nature which God has given us; But all *Actual*  
 Corruptions, are the Effects of our *Free Choice*,  
 and the Fruit of *our Own Inventions*. God *has*  
*made man upright, but they have sought out many In-*  
*ventions.*

Of This Declaration of the Wise man, there  
 are two parts. 1<sup>st</sup>, A justification of *God*, from  
 all possibility of being charged with the Sins of  
 Men: *God has made Man upright.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, A con-  
 fession, that the Sin and Misery of *Men*, is whol-  
 ly owing to themselves: *But they have sought out*  
*many Inventions.*

I. Here is a justification of *God*, from all pos-  
 sibility of being charged with the Sins of Men:  
*God has made Man Upright.* Could wicked Men  
 with any truth affirm, that Wickedness was the  
 Fault of their *Nature*, and not merely the Cor-  
 ruption of their *Will*; it would be a just Excuse  
 both in the Sight of *Men* and before the Tribu-  
 nal

nal of God, to alledge that they *Were* only what SERM.  
 God made them, and what they could not but of XIV.  
 Necessity be. There is nothing therefore more  
 constantly and sollicitously inculcated in Scrip-  
 ture upon all Occasions, than that Men's destruc-  
 tion is of *themselves*, and not the Appointment of  
 him that made them. And upon *this* are ground-  
 ed all the *Promises*, and the reasonableness of all  
 the *Threatnings* of God. But though Wickedness  
*is not* Men's Nature; yet Weakness and Tempta-  
 tion, and Liableness to Sin, *is*. And the very  
 Nature of a Probation-State, the Promises of Re-  
 ward to Obedience, and the Threatnings of Pu-  
 nishment to them that shall comply with Temp-  
 tations; *supposes* men to be *Capable* of being cor-  
 rupted, and to be always *in danger* of being se-  
 duced into Sin.

'Tis evident therefore, *1st*, that God's having  
 made Man *upright*, does not signify his having  
 made them *incapable* of Sin, or exempt from all  
 Temptation. No: This is perhaps a State that  
 no Creature ever was, or can be, created in. For  
*he chargeth even his Angels with Folly, and the*  
*Heavens are not pure in his Sight.* Not only the  
 Angels that *fell*, and incurred irrecoverably  
 the final Wrath of God, appear evidently to  
 have been created capable of Sinning: But the  
*good* Angels themselves, who kept their first  
 Estate, and never forfeited their Title to the Di-  
 vine Favour; even *These* the incomprehensible  
 Purity of the Holy One charges with Folly. And  
 2 nothing

SERM. nothing is perfectly faultless in the All-seeing  
 XIV. Eyes of him, who alone is Goodness and Holiness itself. And indeed, could any Creature be made originally and absolutely incapable of sinning; there would be no Room for Trial, there could be no Probation, there could be no Obedience, and no Reward: But the Happiness which such a Creature would enjoy, would be by Nature compleat and indefectible, like to the Happiness of God Himself. Which is inconsistent with the Nature of a Created Being.

2dly. Therefore; Neither from This expression of God's having made Man *upright*, ought it to be imagined, that God originally created *Man* in That Excellency of Nature, which *Angels*, who yet were liable to Sin, were at first endued with. There is a *proper* Excellency, peculiar to every Species or Kind of Things. And as, in the *Natural World*, God created every thing perfect in its kind; and beheld, when he had finish'd it, that it was very good; And yet One thing, though perfect in its Order and Degree, is nevertheless very far from equalling the Perfections of Another, that belongs to the more exalted Rank of a nobler Species: So, in the *Moral World* of rational and intelligent Creatures, there are Capacities and Faculties, there are Perfections and Excellencies *peculiar* to every Sort of Beings, and appportionate to their proper Subject. And as we always understand, when we say God has given to such or such a Person,

son, Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge; SERM.  
As we always (I say) understand thereby, that XIV.

he has indued That Person in a remarkable manner with the Knowledge and Wisdom of a *Man*, not with That of a Superior and more Powerful Spirit: So, when the Preacher declares in the Text, that God did make *Man upright*; 'tis manifest it must be understood that he created him with the *Uprightness*, not of an *Angel*, but of a *Man*; with such an Uprightness, as is compatible to a frail, mortal, and fallible Creature.

3dly, Further yet; Neither can the Words of the Text be so interpreted, as if *Solomon* meant to speak of *That particular Uprightness*, wherein our first Parent was created in *Paradise*; in opposition to *that general State of Corruption*, which has ever since prevailed in the World. For he does not insist upon *This*, that God created our *first Parent upright*; but upon *This*, that notwithstanding all that *can be said* of the Meanness and Frailness of our Nature, notwithstanding all the disadvantages we *can* alledge ourselves to lie under in consequence of Sin having been brought into the World; yet *still* God has made *Man upright*. *Man*; That is, the *Species* or whole Race of *Men*: All those particular *Men*, who in the following Words are said to *have sought out many Inventions*. The Uprightness therefore here spoken of, cannot be *That original Uprightness*, which was forfeited by the Sin of our first Parent; but *That continued Uprightness*, with



SERM. which every Man Now comes into the World,  
 XIV. notwithstanding the Fall; *That Uprightness,*  
 which every wicked Man, in his own proper  
 Person, is justly condemned for voluntarily de-  
 parting from, by *seeking* out and following his  
 own evil *Inventions*. And *This Uprightness,*  
 which belongs even to *Fallen Man*, and which  
 is necessary to discharge God from the Sins of  
 Men, consists in This; That, notwithstanding  
 all the *Weakness* and *Infirmity* of our Nature,  
 which God, who considers that we are but Dust,  
 readily allows for; and, notwithstanding all the  
*Consequences* of the Fall of *Adam*, which are abun-  
 dantly provided against by the Death of *Christ*;  
 and notwithstanding all our *Temptations*, and all  
 our proneness to Sin: No man is under a *Neces-*  
*sity* of being Wicked: No man can say 'tis the  
 Fault of God's Creation, no, not even of *that*  
*frail Nature* which he receives from *Adam*, but  
 the Wicked Choice of his own unreasonable Will,  
 that makes him *live vitiously*; and comply with  
 those *Temptations* which in this frail State na-  
 turally and perpetually surround him. That we  
 are perpetually *liable to Temptation*; is indeed the  
 weak Condition of our Nature, and the Unhap-  
 piness of our present State. But *Temptation* is  
 not *Sin*; And being *tempted*, is not inconsistent  
 with *Uprightness*: That is, 'tis not inconsistent  
 with *such Uprightness*, as God expects of us in  
 this very frail, fallible and imperfect State. Did  
 God now require of us the Uprightness of *An-*  
*gels*,

gels, or even the Uprightness which our *First* SERM. *Parents* ought to have maintained in Paradise; XIV. we might perhaps have had reason to complain, that the Abilities of our Nature were not answerable to what was expected from us. But since the Obedience and Holiness required of us, is only of the *same Kind and Proportion* with *that Uprightness* our Nature *still* retains ever since the Fall; 'tis evidently not the Fault of *God*, nor of that *Nature* he even *Now* gives us, but the wicked *Inventions* only of our own Hearts, that make us wicked and miserable. God has given us *Eyes* to discern the Light, *Understanding* to distinguish between Good and Evil, a *Will* whereby we are enabled to choose the One and refuse the other. And in the *Truth* or *Reality* of these Faculties, not in the *Perfection* of them; that is, not in their being such as *CANNOT* be deceived or imposed upon, but in their being such as *do not necessarily deceive US* without our own Negligence and great Fault; in *this* consists the Uprightness wherewith God now sends Men into the World, even since the Fall.

There is only *One* great Objection, against what has been hitherto offered upon this Head. And that is, that the Doctrine of *Original Sin* has by Divines sometimes been so explained, as if Man, since the Fall, had no remains left of those Powers and Faculties, which alone distinguish him to be a free and rational Agent. Which Explication if it were true, 'tis Evident  
the

SERM.  
XIV.

the *Sins of Men* would indeed immediately become chargeable upon *God*. And, far from making Man *upright*, as *Solomon* affirms; it would on the contrary be true, that he now makes Men *not so much as capable* of any *Religion* at all. For the clearing of this Prejudice therefore; we need only here, as in all *other* Difficulties, *separate* the *Certain* Doctrine of Scripture, from the *Uncertain* Explications of Men: And then the whole *Ground* of the Objection, will be taken away. Now *All* that the Scripture teaches concerning this Matter, is contained in what it affirms, *1st*, Concerning the *Transgression itself*, of our first Parents; and *2dly*, Concerning the *Consequences* of that Transgression, to them and their Posterity.

*1st*, The History of the *Transgression itself* of our first Parents, is related very briefly in the third Chapter of *Genesis*. And though neither there, nor elsewhere in Scripture, it is called by that Name; yet it may very properly be called the *Original Sin of Men*; because it was the first introducing of Sin into this World; and, before it, there was no such thing as Sin upon Earth. The *Original Sin of Men* therefore, was the *Actual Sin* of our first Parent; But it could not be the *Actual Sin* of any other Person, because it was committed before any other had a Being. To affirm that the *first actual Sin* of *Adam*, was *Imputed* to all Mankind as well as to him; is to affirm what the Scripture does not teach. And besides;

besides; if, to impute to *other Persons* the *actual* SERM.  
XIV.  
*Sin of One*, be to account it *Theirs* as well as *His*; 'tis evident this is impossible with God,  
 who cannot account *Sin*, or *any thing else*, to be  
 what it is *not*.

But 2dly, Though the *Actual Transgression* of  
 our first Parent, was *His* only, and not *Ours*;  
 yet there are the *Consequences* of thus introducing  
*Sin* into the World, which are common to *Him*  
 and his *Posterity*. And these are, *Mortality*,  
*Exclusion out of Paradise*, the *Miseries of the pre-*  
*sent Life*, and a *greater Liableness and stronger*  
*Temptation to Sin*, in their *corrupt Affections*.  
 God threatned *Adam*, that in the Day he eat of  
 the *forbidden Fruit*; that is, whensoever he should  
 knowingly *presume* to do what God had thought  
 fit to *forbid*, he should *surely die*. And had that  
 Threat been *immediately* executed, 'tis plain his  
*Posterity* could have had no Being at all; and  
*as plain*, that no Injustice could thereby have  
 been done *them*, who never *Were*. But the Mer-  
 cy of God granted *Adam* a Reprieve; and, in-  
 stead of *dying* immediately, he *only became subject*  
*to Mortality* by his Sin. That is; being now  
 excluded from the Benefit of the *Tree of Life*,  
 (which was a *Means* or an *Emblem* of *Immortali-*  
*ty*,) consequently his *natural Mortality* must of  
 necessity *actually* take place upon him. And so  
 it must likewise upon all his *Posterity*. In which  
 matter; since it was merely the Effect of God's  
 Mercy towards *Adam*, to permit us a Possibility  
 of



SERM. of beginning to live; it cannot be thought unjust, that he should appoint us to die. Especially since *that Death* which was introduced by *Adam*, (and *whatever* would have been the *Consequences* of it in the *future State*) was as universally removed by the *second Adam*, (who is the Lord from Heaven,) as it spread universally after the Transgression of the *first*. For as in *Adam* all die, (all Men are made mortal;) even so in *Christ* shall all be made alive, (shall be restored from that natural Mortality,) *Rom. v. 22.* And as, by the Offence of One, Death came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of One, the free Gift is come upon all Men to Justification of Life, ver. 18; that is, to a Possibility again of obtaining eternal Life.

As to the Exclusion out of *Paradise*, and the *Miseries* of the present Life consequent upon God's cursing the Earth; they are, with regard to the *Posterity* of *Adam*, only natural and necessary Consequences of his losing those free Gifts and Favours of God, which neither *They* nor *He* ever had any Claim of Right to enjoy. And, after all; the *Miseries* Men bring upon themselves in this World by their own *Sins*, are much greater than those they suffer in Consequence of the Transgression of *Adam*. For, notwithstanding God's Curse upon the Earth, the Condition of Men would be in many Degrees better than it is; nay, even very tolerable; did it not perpetually happen, that One Man's Sin makes him a Tyrant to Others,

Others, and an Enemy to himself. And that SERM.  
XIV.  
Men, who have their *Beings* through Mercy, should undergo the *natural Calamities* of this mortal State; cannot be unjust with God, any more than that they should at all be *born Mortal*. Nor can any Reason be given, why God might not have made Men at first to live but such a certain Number of Years as they Now do, if he had so pleased; nor why he might not originally have put them into the World with only such a Proportion of Good to be enjoyed by them, as virtuous and good Men may Now enjoy in this World, if all Men were truly virtuous and religious.

Lastly; As to the *Temptations and Liableness to Sin*, which are greater and stronger since the Fall, through Men's corrupt Affections; they are by no Means inconsistent with that Uprightness, which I am now speaking of. For *Temptation* is not Sin, but the Tryal and Occasion of Virtue. And God, who knows how to make just Allowances for every one's Case, with the most exact Proportion and Equity; may prove the sincere Obedience of his Creatures, by what Tryals and Temptations he himself, in his All-wise Government, thinks fit to permit. In all which, 'tis certain that God makes no Man Wicked by Nature; but every Man then sinneth, when he is drawn away of his own Lust and inticed. For, when Lust has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when 'tis finish'd, bringeth forth Death, Jam. i. 15. And this may suffice for Explication of the first Part of the wise

SER. M. Man's Assertion in the Text, in justification of  
 XIV. God from all possibility of being charged with  
 the Sins of Men; that *God has made Man upright.*

II. Here is in the 2<sup>d</sup> Place a Confession, that the Sin and Misery of Men, is wholly owing to *themselves*: But *THEY have sought out many Inventions*. And concerning this, there needs not much to be added. For when it has once been made appear, that God made Man *upright*; that is, that notwithstanding all the Infirmities of their Nature, he has yet endued them with *proper Faculties* for their *present State*, to enable them to perform the Duty that is expected of them, according to the Proportions of a *Man*, in this very imperfect State; it follows in Course, that the *Corruptions* wherewith they deprave themselves, are not the Fault of that *Nature* which God has given them, but the perverse *Inventions* of their own Wills. And indeed, whoever looks into the World, cannot but observe, that much the greater Part of the Vices of Men, arise plainly from bad Education and ill Example, from the Allurements of the World and the Temptations of ill Company, from the Violence of ungoverned Passions and the Perverseness of unreasonable Desires: None of which things do belong properly to the *Nature* of a reasonable Creature, but are reasonable and violent, and therefore *unnatural* Corruptions of the Faculties wherewith God has indued us.



To enter into the *Particulars* of *All* vicious SERM.  
 Habits, would be impossible, as well as disagree- XIV.  
 able. But, to mention briefly the three *great*  
 Heads or Instances of Corruption.

1<sup>st</sup>, With respect to our Duty towards God.  
 Is it not evidently *agreeable to the nature* of *rational* Creatures, to adore and worship, to love and to obey, the supreme Author and Preserver of their Being? And is it not an unnatural *Invention*, fought out by the most brutish Degeneracy; to forsake the Worship of Him that made the Heavens and the Earth and the Seas and all that in them is, to worship Wood and Stones graven by Art and Man's Device; and to *change the Glory of the incorruptible God, into Images made like corruptible Man, and to Birds and four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things?* Or even in the Service and Worship of the *True God*, to forsake *that Method* of Worship which he himself has appointed; and set up any *Inventions of their own*, in the Place of what God has expressly commanded.

2<sup>dly</sup>, With regard to our Duty towards Men:  
 Does not *Nature* plainly lead us to Righteousness and Truth, to Justice and Equity, to universal Charity and Good-Will towards each other? And is it not apparently the base *Invention* of a Heart which has laid aside all Humanity, that is, all true humane *Nature*; to enrich itself by Fraud and Unrighteousness, by oppressing the Innocent and the Poor; or to exalt itself by Violence and  
S 2
Cruelty,



SERM. Cruelty, and insulting over the Miseries of its  
XIV. Fellow-Creatures?

*Lastly*, With regard to our Duty towards *Ourselves*: Are not the Appetites of *Nature*, reasonable and modest, regular and sober, peaceable and contented with their proper Limits? And is it not plainly the *Invention* of an evil Heart, and of a wilfully degenerate and corrupted Spirit; to heighten unnatural Appetites by Art, to blow up disorderly Passions by obstinate Self-Will, and to indulge unreasonable Desires by habitual Opposition to right Reason and Religion?

In all these Cases therefore 'tis manifestly true, that *God has made Man upright, but they themselves have sought out many Inventions*. *Inventions*, to corrupt by indirect Practices the Simplicity of Nature: And, when they have so done, *Inventions* to deceive themselves, by giving the Name of *Nature* to the *unnatural* Effects of evil Customs and Habits; and *Inventions* to lay themselves asleep in their Error and Deceit, by finding out numberless Ways of reconciling a *wicked Life* with the Hopes and with the Pretences of *Religion*.

The Application of what has been said, may be very Brief. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, From what has been said, we may observe, that the Difficulty of obeying the Commandments of God, does not so much arise, generally speaking, from the Nature of our *Duty*, or from the Nature of *Man*; as from the Temptations of the  
World

*World, and from the Custom of Sinning. To I- SERM.  
 dolatry, Prophaneness and Irreligion, there is no XIV.  
 Temptation in Nature; but from the Wickedness  
 of Men, wilfully deceiving one another, and be-  
 ing deceived. To Iniquity, Cruelty and Injustice,  
 there is nothing in human Nature that prompts us;  
 but the Vices are inhumane as much as unchristian,  
 and the effects only of unreasonable indulged e-  
 vil Habits. To Intemperance and Debauchery,  
 there are indeed in many Persons strong Inclina-  
 tions; that may seem more Natural, and to be  
 more immediate Effects of Man's original Cor-  
 ruption; being a Law in the Members, warring  
 against the Law of the Mind, and bringing Men in-  
 to Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death. But e-  
 ven these Inclinations, are Temptations only, and  
 not Sins; unless they be consented to and indulg-  
 ed, in unreasonable and unlawful Instances; which  
 God has given us the Use of Reason, and the  
 Obligations of Religion, on purpose to restrain.  
 If therefore it be natural to Man to be a reason-  
 able Creature, 'tis natural to him also to be Religi-  
 ous; Religion being nothing else but the highest  
 Reason, and the keeping our Passions subject and  
 obedient to its Laws. Wherefore when St. Paul  
 affirms, Eph. ii. 3. that we all were by NATURE  
 children of wrath; 'tis a very great Abuse of Scrip-  
 ture, to understand him as if he had said, that  
 we were CREATED children of wrath. For the  
 Nature the Apostle there speaks of, is not that  
 Nature wherein God created us, but that second*

SERM. *Nature of evil Habits, which wicked Men bring*  
 XIV. upon themselves by *Custom* in Sinning; *that Na-*  
*ture*, which we usually mean even in common  
 Speech, when we say 'tis the *Nature* of a profane  
 or vitious Man, to act profanely or vitiously.  
 For so are the Apostle's *express* Words: *We were*  
*by Nature*, saith he, *the Children of Wrath*, even  
*as Others*; because *among them* *WE* also had our  
*Conversation in Times past*, in the *Lusts of our Flesh*,  
*fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind*:  
 Speaking of Christians, converted from Heathen  
 Wickedness and Idolatry.

And *this* shews, in what manner also are to be  
 understood such Texts as these which follow. *Be-*  
*hold, I was SHAPEN in Iniquity and in Sin did my*  
*Mother CONCEIVE me*, Ps. li. 5. *The Wicked*  
*estranged from the WOMB, they go astray as soon*  
*as they are BORN, speaking lies*, Ps. lviii. 3. *I*  
*knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and*  
*wast called a Transgressor from the WOMB*, Is.  
 xlviii. 8. *They were a naughty Generation, and*  
*their Malice was BRED in them, and their Cogi-*  
*tation would never be changed*. Wisd. xii. 10. The  
 Meaning of all these Texts is, not that Men  
 were really Wicked by necessity of *Nature*; but  
 'tis a Complaint of them, that they were so  
 wicked and corrupt, as if, speaking by Simili-  
 tude, it had been bred even in their very *Nature*.  
 But that it is not so meant *literally*, appears from  
 hence, that, on the contrary, the same manner  
 of speaking is used concerning good Men also.



*Job xxxi. 18.* describing his own charitableness SERM.  
 to the Poor, he saith; *from my YOUTH be, (the XIV.*  
*Poor) was brought up with me; and I have guided*  
*her (the Widow) from my Mother's WOMB.*  
 And *Eccles. i. 14.* describing very righteous  
 Men, he saith, *To fear the Lord, is the Begin-*  
*ning of Wisdom; and it was created with the*  
*Faithful in the WOMB.* The Meaning is;  
 such Persons are as just and righteous, as if Vir-  
 tue (comparatively speaking) had not been a  
 Matter of Choice, but as if it had really been a Part  
 even of their Nature itself.

2dly, From what has been said, we may see  
 the Reason of the Manner of our Saviour's Ad-  
 monition to his Disciples; when, taking up a  
*young Child* in his Arms, and recommending its  
*natural* Simplicity, Humility and Innocence;  
 he told them, that *except they were converted and*  
*became as little Children they should not enter*  
*into the Kingdom of Heaven*; for that of such was  
*the Kingdom of God.* And St. Paul makes use of  
 the same Similitude, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *In Under-*  
*standing, saith he, be Men, but in Malice be ye*  
*Children*; that is, be ye like to those who have  
 not yet sought out any evil Inventions.

3dly, We may from hence observe, how great  
 the Sin of those is, who by ill Advice, or bad  
 Example, corrupt the Minds of Children, or of  
 Men. This is, in the highest Degree, being  
 like unto Satan, the great Tempter and De-  
 stroyer of Mankind. And if they shall severely



SERM. be punished, who *comply* with those Temptations which rob them of their *own* Innocency, and  
 XIV. destroy that Uprightness wherein God had created them; of how much *soer* Punishment shall  
*Those* be thought worthy, who industriously labour in teaching Others also to seek out evil *Inventions*.

A SER-

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Dec. 29, 1723.

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ROM. ix. 23, 24.

*And that he might make known the Riches of  
his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he  
had afore prepared unto Glory: Even Us  
whom he hath called, not of the Jews only,  
but also of the Gentiles.*

**T**H E R E is no Part of the whole New Tes- S E R M .  
tament, of greater difficulty to be under- X V .  
stood ; or which has been more misapplied by  
the

S E R M. the Ignorant, more wrested by the Learned, and  
 XV. more falsely interpreted by the melancholy pi-  
 ous Person; than this 9th Chapter of St. Paul's  
 Epistle to the Romans. In which Chapter, whilst  
 some have greatly perplexed themselves by pick-  
 ing out some of the middle Verses of it; con-  
 cerning God's electing the *Children who were yet*  
*unborn*, and had *neither done good nor evil*; con-  
 cerning his *loving Jacob*, and *hating Esau*; con-  
 cerning his *hardning Pharoah*; and *shewing Mer-*  
*cy on whom he will have Mercy*, and *having Com-*  
*passion on whom he will have Compassion*; and con-  
 cerning his having the same Power over Man-  
 kind, as the *Potter* has over the *Clay*, to make  
 one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour:  
 Whilst some; I say, have greatly perplexed  
 themselves by picking out some of these Parti-  
 culars singly; 'tis yet nevertheless very evident,  
 both from the Apostle's *Introduction* of his Dis-  
 course at the *Beginning* of the Chapter, and from  
 his *Conclusion* in *summing up* of his Argument  
 at the *End*; that the Design of the *Whole*, is not  
 at all to speak concerning any Decree of God,  
 with respect to the *final* and *eternal* State of *par-*  
*ticular Persons*; but only to declare both the so-  
 vereign Power and Justice of God, in distribut-  
 ing to *different Nations* in divers Ages *what diffe-*  
*rent Advantages* he pleases; and revealing his  
 Will to them at *what Times* and in *what Manner*  
 he thinks fit. As, in that great Instance of his re-  
 jecting the *Jews*, and calling in the *Gentiles*.  
 Which

Which, at the *Beginning* of the Chapter, the SERM. Apostle expressly declares to be the Aim and XV. Intention of his Discourse: And at the *End* he sums it up, as the Conclusion designed: And all the *intermediate* Parts of it, and the Examples therein alledged, are plainly nothing but *Similitudes* and *Illustrations* of this Argument.

The Words of the Text itself, are as clear a Declaration of this whole Matter, as can be desired. *That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory; even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* Here the Apostle clearly and expressly declares, that by the *Vessels of Mercy, prepared afore* of God *unto Glory*, (of whom he had been treating in the fore-going Part of the Chapter,) he did not mean *particular Persons* chosen unconditionally to *eternal Salvation*; but the *whole Body* of Christians, *even US whom he has called*, (and who have *obeyed* that Call by believing in Christ,) not from among *the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*: *Called*, to receive that Grace and Mercy, and to embrace those Advantages of the Gospel; by rejecting of which, the *Jews* became *Vessels of Wrath* fitted for Destruction. And *We*, in like Manner, notwithstanding our being at present the *Vessels of Mercy*, yet, if *we live unworthy* of the same Advantages, the Apostle bids us beware, lest, since God spared not the *Jews*, the natural Branches; much more he also spare



SERMON. spare not Us, who were but ingrafted after their  
XV. Fall.

But, to enter into a more full and particular Explication of the Apostle's *whole* Discourse. In the foregoing Part of this Epistle, he had shown at large, *that* the Gentiles, by corrupting themselves contrary to the Law of Nature, (*ch. i.*) and the Jews by disobeying the Law given them from Heaven, (*ch. ii.*) were *Both of them* become equally liable to the Wrath of God: For that, God being no Respector of Persons, *as many as have sinned without the Law, shall perish without the Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law, shall be judged by the Law*, *ch. ii. v. 12.*

*That* therefore the Insufficiency of *Both* these Laws, either to preserve Men from Sin, or to furnish them with sufficient Means of Reconciliation after Sin; I say, the Insufficiency of *Both* these Laws evidently appearing; consequently *both* Jews and Gentiles were obliged to believe in Christ; embracing and obeying the Grace or gracious Terms of the Gospel, as the only Means of Justification for the future, (*ch. iii.*) *For since all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, they can only be justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, v. 24.* That is; *All* being Sinners, they can none of them claim Salvation by the Merit of their Obedience, but merely through the gracious Pardon of Sin freely granted to Penitents thro' Faith in Christ.

*That*

*That this Justification by Faith without Works, SERM. XV.*  
 (that is, by the Obedience of the Gospel alone, without the Ceremonies of the Law,) was abundantly sufficient; because it was the same, by which Abraham himself, the Father of the faithful, had been justified, (ch. iv.) For the Promise was not to Abraham or to his Seed through the Law (the Mosaick Law,) but through the Righteousness of Faith, ver. 13.

*That this Justification by the Faith and Obedience of the Gospel, affords much greater Assurance of present Peace and Reconciliation with God, and of eternal Life and Glory hereafter, than the Law could do, (ch. v.) For if (saith he) when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him, ver. 9.*

*That this free Justification by Grace through the Faith of the Gospel, without the Ceremonies of the Mosaick Institution, obliges Men to a stricter Obedience, to greater Purity and Holiness of Life, than the Law itself had done, (ch. vi.) Christians being now made free from Sin, and become the Servants of Righteousness; being dead unto Sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ver. 11 and 18.*

*That the Law of Moses, was by no Means able to deliver Men from the Bondage and Slavery of Sin; from forbearing to do the good they would, and from doing the evil they would not;*  
 from

SERMON. from the *Law* in their Body, warring against the  
 XV. *Law* of their Mind, and bringing them into Capti-  
 vity to the *Law* of Sin and Death. (ch. vii.) But  
 that the Gospel, having delivered Men from the Bo-  
 dy of this Death, from the Bondage of Corruption in-  
 to the glorious Liberty of the Children of God; ena-  
 bled them to prevail, not only over the Temp-  
 tations of Sin within themselves, but also over  
 all the Persecutions and all the Powers of the  
 World, (ch. viii.) For the *Law* of the Spirit of  
 Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the  
*Law* of Sin and Death. And now, Who shall se-  
 parate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribula-  
 tion, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Na-  
 kedness, or Peril, or Sword? Nay, in all these  
 Things we are more than Conquerors, through him  
 that loved us, ver. 2 and 35.

The Apostle, I say, having largely proved  
 these several Particulars in the first Eight Chap-  
 ters of this Epistle; proceeds in this Ninth Chap-  
 ter to answer a great Prejudice and strong Objec-  
 tion, which he foresaw would be raised by the  
 unbelieving Jews, against what he had hitherto  
 been pleading for. For, if his Doctrine deliver-  
 ed in this Epistle was true, the Consequence was  
 plain, that whosoever of the Jews rejected the  
 Gospel; it would follow, notwithstanding their  
 being descended from the Patriarchs, to whom all  
 the Promises were made; notwithstanding their  
 being the peculiar People of God; notwithstanding  
 that to them were committed the Prophecies and Ora-  
 cles



els of God; notwithstanding that to them pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises; it would follow, that they were still nevertheless out of the Way of Salvation, in the most zealous Observance of the ceremonial Righteousness of the Law; unless they believed in Christ, and obeyed the Gospel, which is the Righteousness of Faith. This the Jews thought to be an impossible Doctrine, and contrary to the Promises of God made to their Fathers the Patriarchs; and that therefore it was only an effect of the Apostle's Zeal and Prejudice against them, since his forsaking Them, and being converted to Christianity. To this Objection therefore he replies at large, in this Ninth Chapter; by shewing that there was no Injustice in God, no breach of Promise, no change of his Will, in rejecting the unbelieving Jews, and receiving in the Gentiles; since even originally the Promise was not made to All the Children of Abraham, but to Isaac only; and not to Both the Sons of Isaac, but to Jacob only: And, of the Posterity of Jacob, All were not Israel, which were of Israel; but, in Elijab's Days, seven thousand only were the true Israel; and, in the time of Isaiab, though the number of the Children of Israel was as the Sand of the Sea, yet a remnant only was to be saved; And, during the whole Period of the Law, God had Mercy on whom he would have Mercy, and Compassion on whom he would have Compassion; That is,

not



SERM. not on the whole people promiscuously, but on  
 XV. whom *he himself* pleased, who was the *Alone* competent Judge, and who *Alone* could infallibly distinguish such as were truly stedfast in their Faith or Fidelity towards him: And *whom he would*, he *hardened*; that is, out of obstinate and incorrigible Offenders, he chose whom he pleased, to make remarkable examples of his Wrath and Vengeance. Since this, saith the Apostle, was the Case *Originally*, and the method of God's proceeding *all along*: Much more at the coming of the *Messias* into the World, who was at the End of the Law, might God justly reject and cast off the Unbelievers; and reckon Those only the true Children of *Abraham*, who imitated the Faith and Obedience of that great Father of the Faithful: *Making known the riches of his glory*, as the Text expresses it, *on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*; *Even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.*

This being premised *in general*, and the principal force of the Apostle's Argument explained; the several *Particulars* of his discourse in this chapter, which have often been so widely mistaken and so strangely misapplied, may without much difficulty be understood. In the *five first verses* he begins with an *Apology* for himself, that, in this whole doctrine concerning the rejection of the *Jews*, he was not at all influenced by any *Prejudice* or *Hatred* he had contracted against his country-

country-men since his conversion to Christianity. SERM.  
So far from *that*, that on the contrary he calls XV.

God to witness in the most solemn manner, that his grief and trouble of Mind for their Impenitency and Incredulity, and for their consequent rejection, and the judgments God would send upon them; was much greater and more uneasy to him, than all the other afflictions and calamities he met with in the World. *I say the Truth*

*in Christ (says he,) I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost; that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my Heart; For I could wish that MYSELF were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

The expression is highly figurative and affectionate. And melancholy pious persons have sometimes been disturbed at it; as if St. Paul's Wish was an inimitable flight of Affection: Whose example herein, if a Christian can *in no case* follow, he may be apt to accuse himself of want of Charity; and yet to follow it in *any case*, seems terrible even to the strongest affection, and shocking even to the most fervent Zeal. For tho' for a good-man, as the same Apostle elsewhere expresses himself, one would even dare to *die*; yet for a man, upon any possible account whatsoever, to be content to become subject to the *Curse of God*, and to his *final displeasure*; this seems beyond the utmost bounds even of Christian Charity itself, either to desire, or to be ever capable of being prevailed with to submit to.

SERM. 'Tis certain therefore, that the Meaning of the  
 XV. Apostle has been misunderstood; and that his intention in this passage, was not to wish himself subject to the *eternal wrath of God*, (which is absurd and impossible;) But, the wishing himself *accursed from Christ* for the sake of his own Nation and People, is to wish, that, if it were possible, he, by bearing *himself* those temporal judgments, which he saw were coming upon *Them* on account of their being *accursed from Christ* through their obstinacy and incredulity, might restore them again to the Favour of God, and reinstate them in the Privileges of his peculiar people. *I could wish that MYSELF were accursed from Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the Flesh.* So far (says he,) am I from bearing any *hatred or ill-will* to my own Nation the *Jews*, that on the contrary I could willingly suffer all the Calamities in the World in their stead, if thereby I could prevent their rejection, and their being *accursed from Christ*. And this high expression of his zeal and concern for his own Nation in the *Beginning* of his Discourse, is an undeniable *Demonstration*, that the *whole Argument itself*, which follows in this chapter, does not at all relate to any imaginary Predestination of *Particular* persons to *eternal Happiness or Misery*; but that it wholly belongs to the rejection of the *NATION of the Jews*, for their Infidelity; and the calling in of the *Gentiles*, by the Gospel. For, in *This Sense*, his Apology for himself is very *pertinent*



inent and apposite, and necessary to be pre-  
 mised in the Introduction of a Discourse, which he foresaw must needs be so extremely  
 ungrateful to the whole Jewish Nation. But according to the Other Interpretation of the Apostle's  
 Arguments there can no Sense at all be made of  
 this *Apology*. For since predestinate or reprobate Persons, if of such he were speaking, were  
 selected *irrespectively* both from among Jews and  
 Gentiles; and *who* the particular Persons so selected  
 were, could not at all be known in this Life;  
 it could not serve any imaginable Purpose in  
 such an Argument, to premise an *Apology* concerning  
 his great Heaviness and continual Sorrow of Heart  
 for the Rejection of his own Nation and Countrymen,  
 the whole People of the Jews.

SERM.  
 XV.

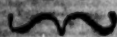
This *latter* therefore, being plainly his true  
 Scope and Design; he proceeds at the 6th Verse  
 to show, that there was no injustice, no Breach  
 of Promise in God, in rejecting the unbelieving  
 Jews, and receiving the Gentiles in their room;  
 forasmuch as the very original Promise to their  
 Father *Abraham*, by which they were first intitled  
 to become God's peculiar People, was not made  
 promiscuously to *all* his Posterity, but to  
 the Children of the Promise, the Seed of *Isaac*  
 only. Which was from the Beginning a Type  
 and plain Psefiguration, that God did not principally  
 intend his Promise, to take place in *Abraham's*  
 Descendants according to the *Flesh*; but in those  
 who by a *Faith* or *Fidelity* like his, were



SERM. in a truer and higher Sense the Children and  
 XV. Followers, of that great Father of the Faithful.

The Promise of God therefore is not at all made void by this new Dispensation: Nor can I in any wise be charged, says he, *as though I supposed the Word of God had taken none effect; For they are not All Israel, which are Of Israel; Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children; But in Isaac shall thy Seed be called; That is, They which are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of God; but the Children of the Promise, are counted for the Seed, ver. 8.* So that, even according to the Original Intent of the Promise made to *Abraham*, Christians of the *Gentiles* who imitated the Faith and moral Obedience of that Patriarch, were more truly his Children, than his unbelieving *Posterity according to the Flesh*.

The same Argument, the Apostle further illustrates in the 10th Verse, by a still more eminent Example. For if, saith he, not only among the Children of *Abraham*, but even among the Posterity of *Isaac* himself, (that Child of the Promise;) God was pleased to continue to make such a Distinction, as to confine the Promise to *Jacob* in Exclusion of *Esau*, even before Either of them was born into the World: Much more may God *Now*, without Injustice, confine his Promise to *such* only, who, after the Example of *Jacob*, believe in God, and obey his Will in what manner soever it be made known to them;  
 Ex-

Exclusive of those, who continue in their Un-<sup>SERM.</sup> belief, and obstinately reject that only Means of <sup>XV.</sup> Salvation which God hath proposed to them: 

Exclusive (I say) of these, notwithstanding that they be by Descent the Posterity of Jacob, and in Other Respects equal to them that Believe. And this is the full Meaning of the following Words, v. 11. *The Children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the Purpose of God according to election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto Rebekah, The Elder shall serve the Younger; As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

That the Purpose of God, according to Election, might stand. The only Difficulty in this Passage is, *What Purpose* of God the Apostle is here speaking of. Many have strongly imagined, that it is his Purpose of choosing some particular Persons unconditionally to eternal Life, and others to eternal Destruction. But the Apostle gives not the least Hint of any such thing. On the contrary, he explains himself in express Words, that he means God's Purpose of appointing the Elder of Isaac's Sons to serve the Younger; And This, not so much in their Persons, as in their national Posterity: And therefore no Wonder, that God made This Appointment before they were yet born. And the Use or Application the Apostle makes of this Instance, is, to prevent an Objection of the unbelieving Jews;

SERMON 2 Who since they could not deny but, notwithstanding all the Promises made to *Abraham and Isaac*, yet God might in *This Sense*, without any Injustice, hate and reject *Esau*; consequently they could not reasonably charge God with any Unrighteousness, in rejecting in like manner the *unbelieving Jews* also themselves. What shall we say then? Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid. ver. 14.

And to the same Purpose he urges, in the following Verses, the Instances of what God declared to *Moses*, and what he did to *Pharaoh*. If of old God declared to *Moses*, that he would have Mercy on whom he would have Mercy, and would have Compassion on whom he would have Compassion; that is, would have Compassion on Men in what Manner, and upon what Conditions he himself judged fit, who is certainly the most proper and the Only unerring Judge: For the same Reason Now also, says the Apostle, neither is it of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, to choose for himself in what Method God shall bring Men to Salvation; (as the *unbelieving Jews* would do, by adhering obstinately to the ceremonial Righteousness of the *Mosaic Law*;) But 'tis of God only, that sheweth Mercy; 'tis His Part only to appoint in what Manner, to whom, and on what Conditions, he will shew it. Even in *Humane Judicatures*, should an *unskilful Spectator* take upon him to find fault with the Sentence of an *Able and Upright Judge*, might not the



the Judge well express himself in this Manner: SERM. XV.  
*I will acquit, whom I see fit to acquit; and I will condemn, whom I see fit to condemn?* Meaning, not that he would do it *arbitrarily*; but that, as having Alone the most perfect Knowledge of the *Law* and of the *Fact*, his Sentence ought not to be questioned by *unskilful Spectators*.

Again: If of old God always reserved to himself a Liberty of choosing likewise out of incorrigible Offenders, whom he thought fit, to make publick and eminent Examples of his Wrath and Vengeance; as in the Instance of *Pharoah*, whom God hardened, (just in the same Sense as He is said to have tempted *David*, when by his Permission *Satan* tempted him, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1; and 1 Chron. xxi. 1. God\* hardened *Pharoah*, I say,) not by making or decreeing him to be wicked, (God forbid;) but, being wicked and incorrigibly obstinate, God raised him up or supported him in his Power, and deferred destroying him, and by many Tryals made both his Obstinacy and his Punishment remarkable and conspicuous to the World, that he might shew his

\* Thus *Deut. xxix. 4.* When *Moses* intended to expostulate with the *Israelites*, and to reprove them in the severest Manner, for their *Willful Obstinacy* and *Ingratitude*; he thus expresses it: *We have seen all that the Lord did ———: Yet the Lord hath not Given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto This Day.* The Sense of these Words of *Moses*, is exactly what at This Day is vulgarly expressed by the Term, *Gracelss.*



SERM. *Power in him, and that his Name might be declar-*  
 XV. *ed throughout all the Earth.* If thus in all Former  
 times, says the Apostle, God always reserved to  
 himself this Power of choosing from among  
 incorrigible Offenders, whom he pleased to make  
 publick Examples of his Wrath; as in this In-  
 stance of *Pbaraob*: For the same Reason Now al-  
 so, says he, neither is there any Injustice in  
 God, in choosing to make the impenitent and  
 unbelieving *Jews*, (whom all his Judgments hi-  
 therto, and all his merciful and gracious Invita-  
 tions to embrace the Gospel, have only *hardned*,  
 instead of bringing them to Repentance;) there is  
 no Injustice in God in making *Them* Examples of  
 his Severity and Wrath, notwithstanding their  
 being the Posterity of *Abraham* according to the  
 Flesh; and at the same Time that he resolves  
 to have Mercy upon as many of the *Gentiles*, as  
 shall obey the Call by which he invites them to  
 receive the Gospel.

Having thus cleared his main Argument, the  
 Apostle proceeds in the 19th Verse, to propose  
 an *Objection*, which he foresaw the unbelieving  
*Jews* would make against the Doctrine he had  
 been hitherto establishing. *Thou wilt say then*  
*unto me, Why doth he yet find Fault? for who hath*  
*resisted his Will?* If God resolves to cast us off  
 and destroy us, as he did *Pbaraob*; why doth  
 he yet blame us, for being so rejected; for how  
 can his Will be resisted? To this, He makes a  
 Two-fold Answer. *First*, by way of general  
 Caution,

Caution, *ver. 20, 21*; And, *secondly*, by a particular and direct Reply, *ver. 22*: and in the Words of the Text. *First*, by way of general Caution, he reproves the Rashness of replying presumptuously against God, *ver. 20*; *Nay but, O Man, Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?* That is; not that God could originally create one Man unconditionally to eternal Life, and another on purpose for eternal Misery; for this, if it were possible, (as 'tis infinitely impossible) to be true, would yet be nothing at all to the Apostle's Argument concerning the Whole Nation of the Jews: But the plain Meaning is (as appears from the express Application of these Passages in the 45th of *Isaiab* and the 18th of *Jeremiab*, from whence they are cited;) that God has as much Power and as much Right to punish or reject one Nation or People, and to receive or exalt another, upon what Terms he himself judges to be most fit and reasonable; as the Potter has to form and mould his Clay, first into one Shape, and then into another. But, *Secondly*, the Apostle answers further to the forementioned Objection, by a particular and direct Reply; that the rejected Jews had no reason at all to murmur against the Power and Will of God; for that though  
it

SER M. it was indeed *his* absolute Will and uncontrollable Power, to punish them *when and in what manner* he thought fit; yet it was *Their own* Obstinacy and Impenitency only, that made them liable to be so rejected and punished *at all*. Ver. 22. *What if God, willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured WITH MUCH LONG-SUFFERING the Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction?* The Words *with much long-suffering*, prove very clearly, that even the rejected *Vessels of Wrath* themselves were not destroyed, till God had first long waited even for their Repentance and Amendment; which evidently shows, it was not *before* determined to be impossible. And then he adds in the Words of the Text: *And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory: Even US whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.* The *Vessels of Mercy* therefore, are not particular Persons chosen irrespectively; but *Us* whom he has called, that is, the *whole Body of Christians* in opposition to the *whole Nation* of the rejected unbelieving *Jews*. Which is also further evident from the Application he makes in the following Verse, of the Words of the Prophet: *And he saith also in Osee, I will call them my People, which were not my People, and her beloved, which was not beloved: And it shall come to pass, that in the Place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my People, there shall they be called the Children of* the



the Living God. And still more clearly, if possible, from the manner of his *Summing up the whole* Argument, ver. 30; *What shall we say then, that the Gentiles which followed not after Righteousness, have attained to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith; But Israel which followed after the law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness; Wherefore? Because they sought it not by Faith, (that is, by embracing the Gospel,) but as it were by the Works of the Mosaick Law.* All which he goes on yet further to explain and illustrate, in the whole 10th and 11th Chapters following. Which are so plain, that they need no Interpretation.

From what has been said, we may draw the two following practical Observations.

1<sup>st</sup>, Such pious Persons, as are apt to be disturbed with melancholy apprehensions concerning their own State; fearing, that after all their sincerest and most earnest endeavours to obey the Will of God by a life of Virtue and true Holiness, they may yet possibly not be of the number of those *Vessels of Mercy, whom he has afore prepared unto Glory*; Such Persons, I say, may have their Doubts removed, by considering, that all those passages of Scripture, from which Some have earnestly endeavoured to establish the Doctrine of absolute and unconditionate decrees, do upon a careful consideration appear to have been greatly misinterpreted; and that by the *Vessels of Mercy, whom God had afore prepared unto Glory*,

St.



SERM. St. Paul plainly means, not particular Persons  
 XV. chosen irrespectively out of the bulk of Mankind;  
 but the *whole Body of Christians*; the universal  
 Church of Christ, in opposition to the *whole Peo-  
 ple or Nation of the Jews*. The *Election* (the cho-  
 sen people) have obtained it, and the rest were  
 blinded.

2dly, On the other hand, such as are apt to be  
 Presumptuous, and think themselves secure in  
 the bare Profession of Christianity; upon account  
 of the *whole Body of Christians* being stiled in Scrip-  
 ture, *the elect, the election, Vessels of Mercy*, and  
 the like: These ought to take Notice, that in  
 like manner as St. Paul, out of the prophet *Isa-  
 iah*, observes that when the *whole Nation* of the  
 Jews were the chosen and peculiar people of God,  
 yet out of Them *a Remnant* only were to be fi-  
 nally saved; So Now also, though the whole Bo-  
 dy of Christians, upon account of God's gracious  
 Offers of Mercy to them in Christ, are stiled in  
 Scripture *the election of grace*; yet Those only who  
 live *worthy* of so excellent a Profession, by the  
 Practice of true Virtue, Righteousness and Holi-  
 ness, shall finally be made partakers of the Bene-  
 fit thereof. For, as Christ chose, (the word in  
 the Original is, *elect*) twelve disciples, and yet  
 one of them proved a Devil and the Son of Per-  
 dition; so, notwithstanding that *all* Christians  
 are the *Vessels of Mercy*, prepared of God afore unto  
 Glory; yet if any man *draws back*, he shall lose  
 the

the Benefit of that Preparation ; and God will no longer *have any Pleasure* in him ; that is, he shall finally be rejected, and not be made Partaker of the Salvation of the Gospel.

SERM.  
XV.

PARISH-CHURCH

St. James's Westminster

On Sunday, Feb. 2, 1733.

LUKE XVII. 12.

A SER-

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at St. James's Westminster

the Benefit of that Preparation; and God will no longer have any Preparation that is, he shall not be rejected, and not be made Partaker of the Kingdom of the Gospel.

# S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St. James's Westminster,

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On Sunday, Feb. 2, 1723.

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LUKE xvi. 12.

*And if ye have not been Faithful in That  
which is Another man's, who shall give you  
That which is your own?*

SERM.  
XVI.

THESE words are the Conclusion of a Parable; in which our Lord shews us, that the Men of *This* world are generally more diligent, more skilful, and more true to their Own Interest, in the pursuit of their *worldly* Designs; than men who have the Knowledge of the *True Religion*, and of the Happiness of the *Life to come*, are in securing to themselves a Portion in That  
*eternal*

*eternal State.* And thence he exhorts his Disci-  
 ples, to learn Wisdom *in this Particular*, even  
 from *vicious and corrupt men*; to learn, even from  
*Their Behaviour*, to make the best Improvement  
 of the Advantages they have in their Hands; and  
 be as diligent in making Provision for the time  
 to come, in Matters of *Eternal Concern*, as o-  
 thers are in *Temporal*. The case he puts by way  
 of Similitude, is that of a *Steward*; who having  
 embezzled his Lord's Goods, and finding he  
 should thereupon be removed from his Place,  
 deliberates with himself what Course he had best  
 to take for his future subsistence. To *dig*, or  
 earn his Bread by the Labour of his Hands, was  
 what he had never been brought up to; To  
*Beg*, he was ashamed. What he at last resolved  
 upon, was to do at present some considerable  
 acts of Generosity to several of his Lord's Deb-  
 tors; that afterwards, when he came to be dis-  
 charged from his Place, he might find some Sup-  
 port in the Returns of *Their Gratitude*: *Ver. 4. I*  
*am resolved what to do; that, when I am put out of*  
*the Stewardship, they may receive me into their*  
*Houses.* Accordingly, sending for his Lord's  
 Debtors, he immediately *remits* to each of them  
 a considerable Proportion of their Debt. Whe-  
 ther we are to suppose he did this *fraudulently*, in  
 further Wrong to his Lord; or whether he did  
 it *with Justice*, out of his own present Substance;  
 is not material to the Intent of the Parable.  
 What our Saviour *observes* upon it, is *This only*;  
 that



SERM. that his *Lord commended him*, ver. 8, *because he had*  
 XVI. *done wisely*: He commended his *Worldly Wisdom*,  
 in securing to himself Friends against the day of  
 Adversity. And the *Application* our Lord makes  
 of it, is *This*: That, what All men, both just  
 and unjust, acknowledge to be the great Instance  
 of Wisdom in *Temporal Affairs*; the making pro-  
 vision before hand against a time of Necessity; is  
 really *much more* so, with regard to things *Eter-*  
*nal*. But in fact, 'tis in this *latter case* much  
 more *rarely* put in *Practice*: For *the children of*  
*This World*, says he, *are in their generation wiser*  
*than the children of Light*. This Observation con-  
 tains an affectionate *Reproof* of the *Remissness* of  
 Christians, in not being sufficiently solicitous a-  
 bout their *future and final Interest*: And there is  
 included in it an earnest *Admonition to them*, to  
 learn from the example even of an *unrighteous*  
*World*, to be true to their Principles; and to be  
 as *Wise* in attending to *their own Advantages*, as  
*worldly Men* are to *Theirs*. Learn, says he, e-  
 ven from the Similitude of the *Unjust Steward*, to  
*lay up for yourselves a Treasure* against the time  
 to come, to *secure to yourselves a Refuge* against  
 the day of Trial. *Make to yourselves Friends of*  
*the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, that when ye fail,  
 they may receive you into everlasting *Habitations*. He  
 that is *Faithful in that which is least*, is *faithful also*  
*in much*; and he that is *unjust in the least*, is *unjust*  
*also in much*. If therefore you have not been *faith-*  
*ful in the unrighteous mammon*, who will commit to  
 your

your Trust the True Riches? And if ye have not been faithful in That which is Another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? There is some little Obscurity in the Words, arising from the manner of expression; especially in that latter part of them, which are the words of my Text. But if we carefully consider their True Sense; they will appear to contain the clearest Reasoning, and the strongest and most noble Argument in the World. In the first place 'tis to be observed, that the words, *unrighteous mammon*, with which our Lord here exhorts his Disciples to make to themselves Friends, do not signify Riches UNJUSTLY gotten, Riches which men have no RIGHT at all to possess; but which they have no Lasting, no certain, no Secure and Permanent Right to; no Right of perpetuity of Enjoyment. For they are expressly opposed, not as unjust or ill-gotten, to just or well-gotten Riches; but as False and Deceitful, they are here opposed to the True Riches; and as insecure transitory Possessions, to Everlasting Habitations.

In the Next place 'tis to be observed, that the words, *He that is Faithful in that which is LEAST, is Faithful also in MUCH*; are a comparison between the Present Life, and the Future. He, and He only, who, in the State of Tryal Here, shows his Fidelity in a Small Trust; shall Hereafter have intrusted to him an unspeakably Larger and more permanent Possession. Thus our Lord explains himself in the Parable of the Talents, Matt. xxv. 21.

SERM. *Well done, thou good and Faithful Servant; thou hast*  
 XVI. *been Faithful over a Few things, I will make thee*  
*Ruler over Many things; Enter thou into the Joy of*  
*thy Lord. Or, as he expressees it in Luke xix. 17.*  
*Well, thou good Servant; because thou hast been*  
*Faithful in a very Little, have thou Authority over*  
*Ten Cities.*

Lastly, 'Tis to be observed (which indeed is the principal difficulty in the Text,) that the words, *Who shall give you That which is your Own?* do not signify, That which is *Already* your own, but that which *is to be*; that which, when once given you, *WILL* be your own for a *Perpetual* and *Unalienable* Possession. If ye have not been Faithful in that which is Another man's, in that which you knew was only a Trust committed to you, and committed to you only for a very short time; how then can you be fit to be intrusted with a Possession for Perpetuity? If in a matter wherein you knew you must be called to account, and knew not every day but the very next might be the day of accounting, you have still ventured presumptuously to be Unfaithful; how are ye fit to be intrusted with Power and a KINGDOM, with Power in your Own Property, with a Possession secure and of unchangeable Duration?

Thus the Sense of our Lord in this whole Discourse, is exceeding clear; and the Argument on which he builds his Admonition, strong and affectionate. Learn, says he, one part of true Wisdom, even from worldly, even from unrighteous Men.

The *unjust Steward* in the *Parable*, foreseeing he SERM.  
XVI. should not long possess his Stewardship, had Wisdom enough to make *some sort of Provision* for himself, against the Day of Adversity. Ye also, says our Lord, are *Stewards* entrusted with a small treasure, for a very uncertain, but certainly very short Time. *This Treasure*, to which you have no *lasting Right*, no *continuing Title*; make to yourselves Friends with it, *Now*. Employ it in such a Manner, in Things innocent and virtuous, in Ways just and righteous, in Works useful and charitable; that *hereafter*, when this *transitory Life* shall fail, ye may be found worthy to be *received into everlasting Habitations*. To obtain a Portion in those *everlasting Habitations*, there is no other possible Way, but by being found faithful in this *Temporary Trial*. For *He that is Faithful in Little*, may reasonably be depended upon, that he will be *Faithful also in Much*; But *He that is Unjust in the Least thing*, can with no Reason expect to be trusted with what is *Greater*. If therefore, says our Lord, ye be not faithful in a Trust of so short continuance, as the present Time is; how are ye fit to have committed to you the *True and Eternal Riches*? And if ye be not faithful in *That which is Another's*, and for which ye are accountable every Moment; how is it fit ye should be trusted with a *permanent Treasure*, a Treasure to continue in your own Power, in your own proper and unalienable Possession.



SERM. Having thus at large explained the *Words*, and  
 XVI. illustrated the *Argument* used by our Lord in the  
 Text; it remains that I deduce from thence some  
*Doctrinal* Observations, which may be of Use to  
 us in *Practice*. And,  
 1<sup>st</sup>, 'Tis obvious to observe, that what our  
 Lord here argues, both in the Parable and in the  
 Application of it, with regard to the use of *Riches*  
 in particular; is equally applicable, and intend-  
 ed to be applied, to *every other* Advantage or A-  
 bility whatsoever. *Authority, Honour, Power,*  
*Knowledge*; *every Opportunity* in Life, of having  
*Influence* upon Men; may, as well as *Riches*, be  
 either made use of to the Glory of God, and the  
 promoting of Virtue; or may be abused to other,  
 and contrary Purposes. The *Ground* of our Lord's  
 Exhortation in the Text, is the *same* with regard  
 to *all* these Things; and may, with *equal Reason*,  
 be applied to them *all*. They are *all of them*, in  
 the *present* Life, of very short; *all of them*, of e-  
 qually uncertain continuance. They are *all of*  
*them* committed to us, as to *Stewards* during  
 pleasure; *all of them*, what we are *accountable* for,  
 every Moment. What have we then to do, ac-  
 cording to *any Measures* of *Wisdom and Prudence*;  
 but to employ all these Things faithfully to *such*  
*Purposes here* in this *transitory* Life, as may *here-*  
*after* be a Foundation for our being *received into*  
*everlasting Habitations*? For if, in the Use of *any*  
 of these Abilities, we be not at present *faithful in*  
*that which is another's*; in that which now for a  
 short

*short Time only, is committed to Us upon Trust, and upon Account, from another: How can we reasonably expect to have them hereafter given to Us for our own, for an unalienable and everlasting Possession?* SERM. XVI.

2dly, A Second doctrinal Observation arising from our Saviour's Argument in the Text, is; that the *present Life* is a *Trial* of Men's *Fidelity*, a *Probation* of their *Fitness* for a *future and more lasting State*. *He that is Faithful in that which is Least, is Faithful also in Much; and He that is unjust in the Least, is unjust also in Much.* If therefore, (says he) ye be not Faithful in a Temporary Trust, Who shall think fit to give you an eternal Inheritance? What Moses said to the Israelites concerning their Passage thro' the Wilderness to the Promised Land, Deut. viii. 2. is exactly parallel to the present Case. *Thou shalt remember all the Way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble thee, and to PROVE thee to KNOW what was in thine Heart, whether thou would'st keep his Commandments or no.* The meaning is; not, that God wants information, or tries Men with regard to himself, who knoweth all Things: But with regard to them, he proves and exercises their *Virtue*; the *Habits* of which, essentially and in the Nature of Things, are produced and improved no otherwise than by *Acts*. In the Fabrick of the natural and material World, every Thing is, by the Necessity of its Nature, exactly and invariably what the

SERM. Creator made it: Nor can any of *these Things*  
 XVI. possibly, by *any* Power of Nature, either *improve*  
 or *destroy* their own originally implanted Perfections. But in the *Moral* World, of intelligent and rational Creatures; the Case is just the *Reverse*. The very *Essence* of *Virtue* consists, in being *freely chosen*. And had not God so constituted *Moral Agents*, as to make *their* Goodness or Badness depend upon the *Habits* they should acquire by their *own free Acts*; he had in the very *Act* of Creation destroyed his own Design, and had not made them at all *Moral Agents*. Consequently, (which is the *noblest* Part of the Idea of God,) he had neither been *King* nor *Judge* nor *Governor* of the World, but merely as an *Artificer* of a *great Machine*. A *Machine*; in the *Fabrick* of which, he *has* indeed displayed, by an infinite variety of the most surprizing Effects, *Wisdom unsathomable*, and *Power inexhaustible*. But 'tis all merely for the sake of the *Inhabitants*, whom he has placed therein, capable of contemplating this divine Workmanship. For otherwise, the whole *Fabrick* of the Earth and Heavens; beautiful, great, and glorious as it is; is yet *in itself*, (being lifeless, void of all Sense and Knowledge, and not so much as Conscious of its own Existence,) less valuable than the meanest single Animal in the Universe. And *together with* an infinite variety of Creatures indued merely with *Life, Sense, and Motion*; 'tis still comparatively as Nothing; 'tis still really of less Value, than *one Rational, Intel-*

*Intelligent, Free, Moral Agent, capable of Knowing, capable of Contemplating and Acknowledging, capable of Imitating, in its Degree and Measure, the Perfections of its great Creator. For the Sake of these therefore, the World was created. And these God cannot but govern in Ways suitable to their nature, as he governs the material World in a Way suitable to its Nature. These he cannot but dispose into different Stations, proportionable to their Moral Capacities and Improvements; in like Manner as, in the natural World, he has adjusted every Thing in Weight and Measure. In the one, appears the Skill and Wisdom of an all-powerful Artificer; in the other alone, appears the Glory and Majesty of a supreme King, and the Righteousness of an all-seeing and unerring Judge. This is the manifest Voice of Nature and Reason; and this is the express and constant Declaration of Scripture. All sorts of Abilities, Powers, and Capacities whatsoever, wherewith God has at present indued Men; Riches, Honour, Authority, Wisdom, Knowledge, and the like; are by our Saviour, in his Parable of the Talents, represented as so many particular Trusts, committed to Men's charge in this World; as Tryals of their Fidelity, in Way of Probation of their Fitness for a better and more lasting State. They who employ not these Abilities to virtuous Purposes, in promoting Truth and Righteousness in the World; are the wicked and slothful Servant, to whom his Lord said, Thou oughtest to have put*

SERM.  
XVI.



SERM. *my Money to the Exchangers, and then at my coming*

XVI.

*I should have received mine own with Usury: Take therefore the Talent from him; — and cast ye the unprofitable Servant into outer Darknes; there shall be Weeping and gnashing of Teeth, Matt. xxv. 27. On the contrary: They who, according to their respective Abilities, employ the different Powers (whatsoever they be) wherewith God has intrusted them, in promoting the Glory of God, and the Practice of Virtue in the World; These are the Servants, who, in trading with five Talents, having gained five more; and with two Talents, having gained the other two; their Lord said to each of them in his proportion; Well done, thou good and faithful Servant; Thou hast been Faithful over a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord. In the Language of my Text: Thou hast been Faithful in that which is another Man's, in that small and short Trust which I committed to thy Charge; I will now therefore give thee a Possession, which shall be in Property thy own, thy own for an unalienable and everlasting Inheritance. In the 24th ch. of St. Matthew, v. 42. our Lord expresses the same Thing still more strongly: Watch therefore, says he, and — be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom his Lord has made Ruler over his Household, to give them Meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing: Verily I say*

say unto you, that he shall make him Ruler over all SERM.  
 his Goods. 'Tis in allusion to this Notion, of the XVI  
 present Life being a Tryal of Men's Fidelity, or of  
 their Fitness for a better State; that St. Paul, when  
 the End of his Days drew near, declares concern-  
 ing himself, 2 Tim. iv. 7. *I have fought a good fight,*  
*—I have kept the Faith;* (I have preserved my  
 Fidelity, or shewn myself Faithful in my Trust:)  
*Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righte-*  
*ousness.* And in the former Part of his Life, de-  
 scribing his Care in the Government of himself  
 and of his own Passions, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under*  
*my Body,* says he, *and bring it into Subjection;* lest  
*that by any Means, when I have preached to others,*  
*I myself should be a Cast-away:* In the Original it  
 is, *I myself should be [ἀδόκιμος] found not Proof;*  
*not Proof against the Temptations of the present*  
*World; not meet for the USE, for the Employ-*  
*ment, for the Station intended me in the Life*  
*to come.* For, (as he in another Place expresses  
 this Matter by a most apt similitude;) *in a great*  
*House,* there are says he, *not only Vessels of Gold and*  
*of Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth; and some to*  
*Honour, and some to Dishonour.* *If a Man there-*  
*fore purge himself from these,)* from ungodly Works  
 and Doctrines mentioned in the former Part of  
 the Chapter;) *he shall be a Vessel unto Honour sanc-*  
*tified and meet for the Master's Use, and prepared*  
*unto every good Work.*

The Principal Method, in which the unsearch-  
 able Wisdom of God has most frequently been  
 pleased

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XVI.

pleased to Try the *Fidelity* of his *Best* and most eminent Servants, has been by *Afflictions* and *Persecutions* of various kinds: *Proving* them, whether, in case of Competition, they would stedfastly prefer the Interest of *Truth* and *Virtue*, in opposition to all the *Advantages*, and to all the *Sufferings* too, of this *present* Life. *Whoever* (says our Lord) *does not bear his Cross, and come after me; cannot be my Disciple*, Luke xiv. 27. And hence it is, that in Scripture we so frequently find the *Trial* of Men's *Fidelity*, compared to the purifying and *Trying* of *Metals* by *Fire*. *Many shall be purified and made white, and tried*, Dan. xii. 10. *And they that understand among the People, shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the Sword and by Flame, by Captivity and by Spoil: — And Some of Them of Understanding shall fall, to Try them, and to purge, and to make them white.* Thus again, *Isa. lxviii. 10. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with Silver; I have chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction. I will refine them, as Silver is refined; and will try them as Gold is tryed.* And, *Job xxiii. 10. He knoweth the Way that I take: When he has tried me, I shall come forth as Gold.* The *Later* Writers of the Books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*, apply the same Similitude with great Justness of Thought, and Eloquence of Expression. *Gold is tried in the Fire, and Acceptable Men in the Furnace of Adversity. The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them.*

Dan. xi.  
33.

Zech. xiii.  
9.

Eccclus. ii.  
5.

Wisd. iii.  
5.

them. Having been a little chastised, they shall be SERM.  
 greatly rewarded; for God **PROVED** them, and **XVI.**  
 found them worthy for himself. As Gold in the Fur- Wisd. iii.  
 nace has be Tried them, and received them as a 5.  
 Burnt-Offering. In the New Testament the same  
 Figure of speaking, is continued in the same Sense.  
 Our Saviour, in his Exhortation to the Christian  
 Church in *That Period of Time*, which is repre-  
 sented by the Church of *Smyrna*: Behold, (says  
 he,) *the Devil* (the Spirit of False Accusation)  
 shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be  
**TRIED**: ——— Be thou faithful unto Death,  
 and I will give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. ii. 10.  
 And at another Time: Because (says he) thou hast ch. iii. 10.  
 kept the Word of my Patience I also will keep Thee  
 from (or carry thee safely through) the Hour of  
 Temptation, which shall come upon all the World,  
 to **TRY** them that dwell upon the Earth. — Him  
 that overcometh, (that is, who shall be found  
 Faithful in that Hour of Tryal, notwithstanding  
 all the Allurements and all the Terrors of an  
 unrighteous World; Him) will I make a **PIL-**  
**LAR** in the Temple of my God: A **PILLAR**,  
 or Eminent Part, of *That Living Temple of God*,  
 of which the *Twelve Apostles* are (by a most  
 beautiful and expressive Metaphor) represented  
 as being the \* twelve *Foundation-Stones*, or \* *Rocks* \*Rev. xxi.  
 on which it is built; and *Jesus Christ* himself the 14. & Mat.  
*chief Corner-Stone*, by which the *Whole Building* xvi. 18.  
 is compact together. With a View to These and  
 the like Promises it is, that St. James declares :

Blessed



SER.M. Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for  
XVI. when he is TRYED, he shall receive the Crown

*Jam. i. 12.* of Life. And, St. Peter: That the TRYAL  
1 Pet. i. (saith he) of your Faith, (of your Fidelity or Faithfulness) being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

3dly, A Third doctrinal Observation, obviously arising from the foregoing, and of great Use in Practice; is This. If the present Life is a Tryal of Men's Fidelity, a Probation of their Fitness for a Future and more Lasting State; then every erroneous Notion, which is of such a Nature, as leads Men to rely upon Any Equivalent whatsoever, instead of employing faithfully those Talents, wherewith God has intrusted them, in promoting his Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness; must needs be a Fatal Deceit. If Men content themselves barely with a zealous Profession of the true Religion, and a diligent avoiding of all false Opinions in Speculation: If they rely entirely upon a regular Observance of those merely External Duties of Religion, which were appointed of God as Obligations and Assistances to True Virtue: If they satisfy themselves with that Sorrow for Sin, and Fear of Punishment upon the Approach of Eternity, which is vulgarly called a Death-bed Repentance: If they depend upon any absolute Decree of God, or upon any Application of the Merits of Christ, to save them,

them, not *from*, but *in* their *Sins*: If they expect to be saved by their *Faith*, meaning thereby mere *Credulity*, instead of *Fidelity* or acting *Faithfully* upon the Principles they profess: In these and all other Cases whatsoever, which can possibly be reconciled with *vitious* and *immoral* Practice; our Saviour will say unto them, *Depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity*. For if ye have not been *Faithful* in a small and temporary *Trust*, how is it fit I should give you a *Kingdom* to be *your Own* for ever?

*Atbly*, and *Lastly*: From what has been said, it appears, that the principal *Difference* of Men, in *God's* Estimation, consists not so much in the *Number* of the *Talents* committed to them, as in the *Degree* of their *Fidelity*, or the *Good Use* they make of them. For, *Many that are First shall be Last, and the Last First*. And to Him who with *two Talents* gained *two* more, as well as to Him who with *Ten Talents* gained *other Ten*, our Lord says, "Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord: For he that is Faithful in *Little*, is Faithful also in *Much*: Wherefore since thou hast been Faithful in that which is *Another Man's*, in That short and small Trust which I committed to thy Charge; I will therefore give thee a Treasure and Inheritance which shall be *thine Own*, *thine Own* for an unalienable and everlasting Possession."

A SER-

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St. JAMES's Westminster,

On Sunday, Feb. 16, 1723.

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LUKE xvii. 37.

*And they answered and said unto him: Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.*

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XVII.

**T**HESE Words are a Proverbial Saying, used by our Lord upon *two* different Occasions. Once in *This Place*, upon occasion of the Pharisees demanding of him, *ver. 20. WHEN the Kingdom of God should come.* And again in the

the 24th of St. Matthew, upon occasion of his SERM.  
 Disciples asking him, *WHEN shall these Things* XVII.  
*be? and what shall be the Sign of thy coming, and*  
*of the End of the World?* In this Latter Place, our  
 Lord, in answer to the Question put to him by  
 his Disciples, gives them a large Prophetick  
 Description of the Destruction of the City and  
 Nation of the Jews, by the Power of the Ro-  
 mans; and a long Series of Other Events, which  
 were to be accomplished before his coming to  
 Judgment. And because he is very particular  
 and distinct in *That Part* of the Prophecy, which  
 relates to the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the  
 Romans, whose Armies carried an *Eagle* for their  
 Ensign; therefore the Generality of Expositors  
 have understood the Meaning of the Words of  
 my Text to be, that *wheresoever the Jews were,*  
*thither would the Roman Armies be gathered toge-*  
*ther to destroy them.* But *This Sense* of the  
 Words seems low; and the *Allusion* to be far-  
 fetched; and the *Application* of them, too much  
 confined; and their *Connexion* in the whole Dis-  
 course, very difficult to be made out. For our  
 Lord, in the Place where these Words come in,  
 in St. Matthew's Gospel, as well as in That of  
 St. Luke, is not speaking of the Romans destroy-  
 ing the Jews; (for, *That Part of his Prophecy*  
*he had finished,* several Verses before :) But he  
 is speaking in One of those Places, concern-  
 ing the Unreasonableness of *looking for Christ's*  
*Coming in Any particular Part of the World,* in  
*the*



SERM. *the Desert, or in the Secret Chambers, or in Any*  
 XVII. *One Place rather than another. And in the Other*  
 Place, he is speaking concerning the *righteous*  
*Judgment of God, distinguishing Persons from each*  
*other in the Highest Degree, between whom in*  
*all Worldly Appearance there was No Distinction.*  
 The true Sense therefore of the Words of the  
 Text, must be gathered, not from any *remote*  
*Allusion* in the single Word, *Eagles*; but from the  
*immediate Connexion* of the intire Sentence, in the  
 Discourse wherein it is joined; and from the *na-*  
*tural Signification* of the whole *Proverbial Saying*,  
 considered as *Proverbial*.

There are several Instances in Scripture, of  
*Other Proverbial Sayings*, inserted in like Man-  
 ner as This in the Text; very usual at the *Time*,  
 and in the *Language*, wherein they were spoken;  
 so as to be easily and as perfectly understood by  
 the *Vulgar*, as the most *literal* Expressions what-  
 soever. Thus Ezek. xviii. 2. *The Fathers have*  
*eaten Sowre Grapes, and the Children's Teeth are*  
*set on Edge*: There was no Man among the  
*Jews*, even of the meanest Capacity, but at first  
 hearing understood those Words to mean, that  
*the Children were punished for the Transgressions of*  
*their Fore-Fathers*. Thus when St. Paul tells us,  
 that *Whatsoever a Man soweth, That shall he also*  
*reap*, Gal. iv. 7. Every even the lowest Under-  
 standing immediately apprehends them to mean,  
 that, according to Men's Behaviour Here, whe-  
 ther virtuous or vitious, so shall their Reward  
 be,

be, or their Punishment, hereafter. Again: When S E R M.  
 our Lord says, *Matt. vii. 16. Men do not gather* XVH.  
*Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*; his Sense  
 is no less obvious, and his Words even more ex-  
 pressive, than if he had said directly, that Vir-  
 tuous Actions cannot reasonably be expected to  
 flow from Corrupt Principles, or from vicious  
 and debauched Minds. The *Proverbial Expres-*  
*sion* in my *Text*, being founded upon a Simili-  
 tude *less common* in our *modern* Language, than  
 These before-mentioned; the Sense of it, for  
 That Reason, does not to an *English* Reader, at  
 first Sight, appear so obvious. But with a *little*  
*Attention* to the *general Nature* of *Proverbial Say-*  
*ings*, it is very easy to be understood. The  
*Nature* of a *Proverb* is, to contain in *one single*  
*Sentence* a *Similitude*, or *Comparison* of *Two Things*  
 with each other; and under the Instance of some  
*one particular Example*, to conclude some *more*  
*general or Universal Truth*. This is evidently the  
 Case, in the *Other* Instances I produced: And so  
 it is likewise in *This* Expression in my *Text*.  
*Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be*  
*gathered together. Wheresoever the Prey is, thi-*  
*ther will the BIRDS of Prey flock towards*  
*it. Wheresoever the Case is the same, (whatso-*  
*ever be the Subject spoken of;) there also the ge-*  
*neral Observation upon the Case, (whatsoever*  
*That Observation be,) will have the same Just-*  
*ness and Truth. Wheresoever the State of things*  
*is the same, and the Circumstances alike; there al-*

SERM. so will *the Event*, in *Any Place*, or at *Any Time*,  
 XVII. be proportionally alike.

— This is plainly the *Sense* of the Words, as it arises from the Consideration of the *General Nature* of a *Proverbial* Expression. And from the Consideration of the *Particular connexion* of the Words with those immediately foregoing, in *Each* of the Passages in the *Two Gospels* where the *same Words* occur; it still more evidently appears to be the *true Sense* of them. In the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, (and the same thing is recorded likewise in the 13th of St. Mark, and in the 21st of St. Luke;) the Disciples had asked our Lord, *WHEN shall these Things be? When shall all these Things come to pass, which thou hast so often foretold to us? And what shall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* The Ground of their Question was; that, upon the Dissolution of the Jewish State and Government, which he had told them was approaching; they expected the *Kingdom of Christ* should immediately be set up, in some remarkable Manner, in some particular Place. In Answer to their Question, and to rectify this their Mistake; our Lord tells them, that not only the City and Temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the Jewish Nation dispersed; but that, after This, there should still succeed a long Train of Calamities, and *the End* should not be yet. For Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And, dur-

Mar. xiii.  
7.

Luke xxi.  
24.

ing That long Period of Time, in Other Parts S E R M.  
of the World likewise, *Nation should rise against* **XVII.**  
*Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom; and there* Mat. xxiv.  
*should be Famines and Pestilences and Earthquakes* 7.  
*in divers places.* And that even all These Calamities, comparatively speaking, should be but the *Beginning of Sorrows.* For, a Deluge of Corruption and Iniquity should overspread the World. ver. 12.  
And there should be very great and very long ver. 9, 10.  
*Persecutions:* And a Time of *Tribulation, such as*  
*had not been since the Beginning of the World.* v. r. 21.  
And that, during this Time, the Gospel should  
*be preached in all the World, for a Witness unto all* ver. 14.  
*Nations.* And his Conclusion of the Whole, is:  
That therefore his Disciples ought not to look  
for the *Kingdom of Christ*, as a Dominion to be  
set up at any particular Time or Place: But in all  
times, and at all places alike, *wheresoever* and  
*whensoever* the Doctrine of Christ is received and  
practised, *wheresoever* and *whensoever* any number of sincere Believers (whether Many or Few) be gathered together in His Name, There (says he) is the Kingdom of Christ. Ver. 23. *If any man shall say unto you, Lo, Here is Christ, or There; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and False Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders.—Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the Desert, go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret Chambers; believe it not. For as the Lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the*



SERM. West; so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man  
 XVII. be. For wheresoever the Carcase is, there will the  
 Eagles be gathered together. The Sense evidently is This. As, in all Places equally, and at all Times, wheresoever the Lightning is, There does the Light of it shine forth; and wheresoever the Prey is, thither do the Birds of Prey resort: So at what Time or Place soever the Doctrine of Christ is received, and practised according to His Directions, There is the Kingdom of Christ.

In the Other Passage, where the same Words are again repeated, which is Luke xvii. 37. (the Words of my Text;) there likewise their Connexion in the Thread of our Lord's Discourse, clearly shows them to have the Like Signification. The Manner in which they are There introduced, is This. Ver. 20. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, WHEN the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them, and said: The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation. Neither shall they say, Lo Here, or Lo there: For, behold, the Kingdom of God is Within (or Among) you. And he said unto his Disciples, The Days will come, when — they shall say unto you, See here, or see there; Go not after them; nor follow them. That is: Think not that the Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished under the Character of any particular Time or Place, or to be known by any External Notes or Marks; But understand, that it is in all Places and at all Times the same; distinguished, always and every where alike, by its

own *intrinsic essence* only; just as the Shining of S E R M.  
*Lightning* is one and the same, from one End of XVII.  
 Heaven to the other. After which he proceeds to  
 warn them, *ver. 26.* that as, in the Days of *Noah*;  
 and in the Days of *Lot*, Men were negligent and  
 secure, having their Thoughts entirely taken up  
 with their present Business; their Ambition,  
 their Covetousness, and their Pleasures; till, on  
 a sudden, the *Deluge of Water* swept them all  
 away in the *one Case*; and *Lightning from Hea-*  
*ven*, joined with an *Earthquake*, destroyed and  
 consumed them in the *other Case*: *Even thus* (says  
 he) *shall it be in the Day when the Son of Man*  
*is revealed.* And then he concludes, in the  
 Words preceding my Text, *ver. 34.* *I tell you,*  
*in That Night there shall be two Men in one Bed;*  
*the One shall be taken, and the other left. Two*  
*Women shall be grinding together; the one shall be*  
*taken, and the other left. Two Men shall be in the*  
*Field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*  
 The Meaning is: In the *righteous and unerring*  
*Judgment of God* the Searcher of Hearts, many  
 Persons shall finally be *distinguished* from each  
 other in the *Highest Degree*, between whom in  
 all *Worldly Appearance* there was *No Distinction.*  
*And they said unto Him, Where, Lord? And he* *ver. 37.*  
*said unto them, Wheresoever the Body is, thither*  
*will the Eagles be gathered together.* That is to  
 say: Your Question is of No moment: 'Tis all  
 one, *wheresoever and whensoever* the same thing  
 comes

S E R M. comes to pass. Difference of Time and Place;  
 XVII. makes no difference at all in God's Account and  
 Estimation, either of Things or Persons. Where-  
 ever the *Case* is the same, and the *Circumstances*  
 alike; *there* also will the *Event* be proportion-  
 ably the *Same*. At what *Times* and in what  
*Places* soever, the Persons to be judged shall be  
 found endued with the like Diversity of Quali-  
 fications; *there* also shall the impartial and un-  
 erring Judgment of God the Searcher of Hearts,  
 distinguish them with the like Distinction. *Watch*

Luke xxi. *ye therefore (says our Lord) and pray always, that*  
 36. *ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things*  
*that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of*

Mark xiii. *Man. And what I say unto You, I say unto All;*  
 37. *Watch.*

Having thus fully and at large explained the  
 true Signification of the Words of the Text:  
 The *Observations* I shall draw from thence, are  
 briefly as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>, That, generally speaking, *All* the *Admo-*  
*nitions* and *Instructions* given by our Saviour to  
 his *Disciples* at different *Times* and upon diffe-  
 rent *Occasions*, were intended by him to be ap-  
 plied (allowing for particular Differences of Cir-  
 cumstances) to *All Christians* at *all times* and in  
*all places*. Concerning Things recorded in the  
*Old Testament*, even from the *remotest Times*, St.  
*Paul* declares, that *Whatsoever things were writ-*  
*ten afore-time, were written for Our Learning; that*  
*We, through Patience and Comfort of the Scrip-*  
*tures*

tures, might have Hope, Rom. xv. 4. When SERM.  
the Scripture tells us, that *Abraham's Faith* was XVII.  
imputed to him for Righteousness, Gen. xv. 6 Rom.  
iv. 22. *It was not written* (says the Apostle) *for*  
*His Sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but*  
*for Us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we be-*  
*lieve on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the*  
*Dead: That is, if We act with the same Fidelity*  
*upon the Principles of Our Profession, as He did*  
*upon His.* On the other hand, when we find  
recorded in Scripture the severe Punishments in-  
flicted upon the Children of *Israel* in the Wil-  
derness, for their repeated Acts of Disobedience;  
*All these things* (says he) *happened unto Them for*  
*Examples, 1 Cor. x. 11. and they are written for*  
*Our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World*  
*are come.* Now if This be so; much more may  
our Saviour's Instructions and Admonitions to his  
Disciples, be generally understood to be appli-  
cable, in proportion to *All Christians.* His Pro-  
phetical Warnings do all of them extend even un-  
to the *End of the World:* And his Directions to  
his immediate Followers are usually couched under  
such Expressions, as were manifestly intended  
for the Use and Instruction of all intervening  
Ages, until his coming to Judgment. *Where*  
*ever two or three* (says he) *are gathered together*  
*in my Name, Matt. xviii. 20. there am I in the*  
*midst of them.* Wheresoever and whensoever the  
Doctrine of Christ is received, and practised, ac-  
cording to his Directions, in the Love of Truth,



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Righteousness and Peace, be it in *one Place*, in one *Age* of the World, or in *another*; be it by *many* Persons, or by *few*: *There* is the *Church of Christ*; To *them* belong all the *glorious Promises*, which he has ever made to his *Church*; and to *them* belong all the *Warnings* which he has given, of *Persecutions* to be expected from an unrighteous and corrupt World. For this Reason, whoever at any Time asked him *when* the Kingdom should be restored to *Israel*, or *when* the Kingdom of God should come; and *when* shall all these Things come to pass; and *what* shall be the Sign of thy coming, and of the End of the World? Instead of mentioning any *particular Time*, he constantly warned them to watch and to be ready at *all Times*. And at the Conclusion of the Prophecy, whereof my Text is a Part; he in express Words declares, (as 'tis recorded by St. *Mark*, ch. xiii. 37.) *What I say unto you, I say unto ALL; Watch.* And at another Time, when his Disciples directly asked him, whether he intended his Discourse in particular to *them*, or in general to *all Men*, *Luke* xii. 41. his Answer is to the very same Purpose. He had been exhorting them, ver. 35, *Let your Loyns be girded about, and your Lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto Men that wait for their Lord* — *Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.* — *And this know, that if the good Man of the House had known what Hour the Thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his*

*his House to be broken through. Be YE therefore* SERM. XVII.  
*ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour*  
*when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord,*  
*speakest thou this Parable unto Us, or even to All?*  
*And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and*  
*wise Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over*  
*his Household, to give them their Portion of Meat in*  
*due Season? Blessed is that Servant, whosoever he*  
*be, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so*  
*doing.*

2dly, A second Observation arising from what our Lord declares in the Text, is; that the Salvation of Men does not depend upon any Differences of *external* Circumstances in the present Life, but entirely upon the *inward* Qualifications of their Minds, and upon their Behaviour under the Circumstances wherein the Providence of God has placed them, *whatsoever* those Circumstances be. *I tell you*, says he, *In that Night there shall be two Men in one Bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left.* And when the Disciples asked him, *Where, Lord?* He answers in the Text, under a known *proverbial* Expression; *where ever the Case is alike, the Event will be the same: Wheresoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* Not only to those who shall be living at the Time and Place of our Lord's coming to Judgment, but to all others likewise, at all Times and in all Places, shall this Declaration of his be verified: *Two Men shall be in one Bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left: By no visible or*  
*appearing*

SEE R M. appearing Differences of worldly Circumstances,  
 XVII. but merely according to their *inward* moral Qua-  
 lifications, shall Men finally be distinguished.  
 Not to those *in particular*, who shall be found a-  
 live at our Lord's second Coming, does he say,  
*Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he*  
*cometh, shall find so doing:* But his Meaning is, to  
*all in general*, in all Times and Places; *Blessed is*  
*that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall*  
*find to have so done.* Thus when the Prophet  
 Daniel says, *ch. xii. 12. Blessed is he that waiteth,*  
*and cometh to—the Time of the End:* The Mean-  
 ing is not, *blest is he that shall happen to live at*  
*the Time of the End;* but, *blest is he who by*  
 Rom. ii. 7. *waiting, that is, by patient continuance in well-doing,*  
 by being constantly upon his Guard against the  
 Temptations of an unrighteous and corrupt World,  
 by *keeping himself* (as St. John expresses it) so that  
*That wicked one toucheth him not;* blest is he who  
 1 Joh. v. by thus *waiting*, shall be found *worthy to attain*  
 18. *that Life* which shall be revealed at the *End of the*  
*Days*, and to *stand before the Son of Man.* Many  
 are very apt to imagine, if they had lived in some  
*other Place* or *Age* of the World, if they had been  
 placed under some *other* Circumstances than they  
*are*, if they had lived in our Saviour's Days, and  
 Luke xvi. at a Time when *one arose from the Dead;* the Prin-  
 31. ciples of Religion would have had a very diffe-  
 rent Effect upon them, from what they *now* have.  
 But all this is a very great Fallacy: And Expe-  
 rience has shewn, that not upon Differences of  
 Time

*Time and Place, but upon the Moral Disposition* S E R M.  
*of Men's Hearts and Minds, does the Influence of* XVII.  
*Religion entirely depend. The Jews in the Wil-*  
*derness were not at all reformed, even by the Sight*  
*of numerous Miracles. And the Pharisees in our*  
*Saviour's Time, who said, If we had been in the*  
*Days of our Fathers, we would not have been par-*  
*takers with them in the Blood of the Prophets; did*  
*yet, by their Deeds, shew themselves to be the*  
*Genuine Sons, and Inheritors of the Temper, of*  
*those who killed the Prophets.*

*3dly and Lastly. The last Observation I shall*  
*draw from this Discourse of our Saviour, of which*  
*my Text is the Conclusion; is, that all the Marks*  
*or Notes, which those of the Church of Rome pre-*  
*tend to give us, of the true Church of God; are*  
*such as our Lord here warns his Disciples not to*  
*be deceived by. Christ, they tell us, is no where*  
*to be found but among them: And the Doctrines*  
*and Benefits of the Gospel, can no other Way*  
*possibly be conveyed to Mankind, than through*  
*the particular Channel of Rome. What is this,*  
*but the very Thing our Lord here admonishes*  
*us to beware of? If any Man shall say unto you,*  
*Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For*  
*there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets.—*  
*Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in*  
*the Desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret*  
*Chambers; believe it not. For as, where ever the*  
*Body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together;*  
*And as, where ever the Lightning is, there will*  
Matt.  
xxiv. 23.-  
—28.  
Luke xvii.  
24. 37.  
the



SERM. *the Shining of it be the same, from the one Part*  
**XVII.** *under Heaven, even unto the other: So also is the*  
 Light of the everlasting Gospel, and of the Scripture  
 of Truth.

Matt.  
xxiv. 24.

Thus again: Pretended *Miracles*, in order to establish their *new Doctrines*, and introduce *new Practices*; what are these, but accomplishments of that prediction of our Lord; *There shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall show great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very Elect!*

Again: *Visibility*, or *worldly Pomp, Grandeur and Authority*, which they make to be another *Note or Mark* of the true Church of God; is directly the reverse of what our Saviour declared to  
 ver. 9. 12. *his Disciples. They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all Nations for my Name's Sake. And, because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold.*  
 Luk. xviii. 8. *And, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth?*

Marks therefore or *Notes* of the true Church of Christ, in the nature of Things, there can be none, but *that one Essential one*, which makes it to be the true Church; viz. the *Profession and Practice of the Truth*; the *Profession and Practice of that Doctrine*, which our Lord himself taught, and which his *Apostles* preached and delivered down in Writing to all succeeding Generations. With this; where ever Two or Three are gathered together in the Name of Christ, there is Christ in the  
 Matt. xviii. 20. *Midst*

*Midst of them; that is to say, there is the true Church of God. Without this; how many, and how great Nations soever, conspire together; how numerous soever the Multitudes be, which follow each other to do Evil; 'tis still only a Sect or Schism, 'tis but a heresy or worldly Faction.*

SERM.

XVII.

Exod.

xxiii. 2.

ST. JAMES'S WESTMINSTER.

On Sunday, April 18, 1725.

M. A. T. 1725.

For your Right to think before Men, that they may see your good Works; and glory your Father which is in Heaven.

SERM. XVII. *What is that which causes all changes to be made as they are, in their own Nature, and in their proper Colours. 'Tis that which is every secret, which removes every Cause, which does every Thing, and seems to us in all their Glory the remarkable and insupportable of Nature. Hence in the following page.*

A SER.

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317  
XVII  
SERMON

Preach'd in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St. James's Westminster,

On Sunday, April 18, 1725.

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MATT. v. 16.

*Let your Light so shine before Men, that they  
may see your good Works, and glorify your  
Father which is in Heaven.*

SERM. XVIII. **L**IGHT, in the first and natural Sense of the Word, is that which causes all Things to be seen as they are, in their true Nature, and in their proper Colours. 'Tis that which discovers every Secret, which removes every Uncertainty, which detects every Deformity, and opens to us in all their Glory the innumerable and inimitable Beauties of Nature. Hence in the figurative Sense, what-

whatsoever enables us to discover any *Truth*, we usually speak of as *giving us Light* in that Matter: For, as the Apostle expresses it, *Eph. v. 13. whatsoever doth make manifest, is Light*. And because some Things, the more they are *inlightned*, more beautiful they appear; whereas other Things love to have their *Deformities* concealed in *Darkness*: Hence in the *Moral Sense* also, whatever Actions or Persons are truly *virtuous* and *praiseworthy*, and consequently always the more valuable in proportion, as they are more perfectly and thoroughly *known*; are frequently in Scripture styled by the Name of *Light*, and the contrary ones by that of *Darkness*. Concerning God himself, upon Account of the infinite Purity and Holiness of his Nature, the Apostle thus speaks; *1 Job. i. 5. God is LIGHT, and in him is no Darkness at all*. And to good Men likewise, in their proportion, is the same Manner of speaking applied; *Eph. v. 8. Ye were sometimes Darkness, but now are ye LIGHT in the Lord: Walk, as Children of Light:—And have no fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but rather reprove them*.

Again; because all Luminous Bodies, in proportion to the Degree of their own Brightness, necessarily diffuse their Light around them, and at a Distance inlighten all other Bodies; hence, in the *religious Sense*, a good Example is a *Light* shining in *Darkness*; spreading its Influence every way; diffusing Instruction, Knowledge, Encouragement to Virtue, and Motives to reformation

of



SERM. of Manners, in the midst of a dissolute and corrupt World. In *this Sense* the Word is used by St. Paul, *Phil. ii. 15. That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the Sons of God without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom ye shine as LIGHTS in the World.* And in *this Sense* 'tis used by our Saviour in the Text; *Let your LIGHT so shine before Men. Ye are, (saith he in the Words immediately foregoing, ye are) the LIGHT of the World: As therefore a City that is set on an Hill, cannot be hid; and as Men do not light a Candle, and put it under a Bushel, but on a Candlestick, and it giveth Light unto all that are in the House; Even so, saith he, let YOUR LIGHT shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven: Let your whole Behaviour be so exemplary, and the Influence of your Religion upon your own Lives so conspicuous to the World; that Men being thereby convinced of the excellency of your Doctrine, may by your Preaching be led from Error to Truth, and be converted by your Example from Wickedness to Virtue.*

'Tis well worth observing here, by the Way, that this Expression of our Saviour, concerning Men's *lighting a Candle*, and putting it, not under a Bushel, but on a *Candlestick*, so that *it giveth Light unto all that are in the House*; is the Foundation of that lively and beautiful Image in St. John's Vision, where the seven primitive Churches of *Asia* are represented under the Similitude of *seven*

*seven golden Candlesticks; and the principal or* SERM. XVIII.  
 most eminent Persons in those several Churches,  
 as so many *Stars* or *Lights* in those *Candlesticks*,  
 giving Light to the *Whole Temple* or *Catholic*  
*Church* of God.

And This concerning the *Nature* of that *figurative* Expression, *Let your LIGHT so shine before Men.*

The following Words, *that Men may see your good Works, and GLORIFY your Father which is in Heaven,* are of very plain and obvious Meaning: That by the *Spreading* of your *Doctrine*, and by the *Influence* of your *Example*, the Practice of true Religion and Goodness may prevail in the World: That Men may see the Beauty and Excellency of Virtue, and the infinite Benefit that would arise to Mankind from the universal Prevalency of true Religion: That they may be convinced of the necessity of reforming their Manners, and of living under a constant Sense of God upon their Minds, in Expectation of a righteous Judgment to come. The *Practice* of *Virtue* upon *These Principles*, is the Establishment of the *Kingdom of God* among Men. And in the *Inlargement* of *this Kingdom* of *Righteousness* and *Holiness*, in the *Increase* of the *Efficacy* of *Truth* and *Virtue*, which is the *Proper Subjection* of *Rational* and *Free Agents*; in *This* consists the *Glorry* of *God* upon *Earth*. Thus the *Conversion* of *Unbelievers*, which *St. Paul* describes by their being *convinced*, and *falling down on their Faces*.

SERMON and worshipping God, 1 COR. XIV. 24. St. Peter  
 XVIII expresses by the same Phrase with This in the  
 Text, of glorifying God: 1 Pet. ii. 12. Having  
 your Conversation honest among the Gentiles; that,  
 whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they  
 may by your good Works, which they shall behold,  
 GLORIFY GOD in the Day of Visitation. And  
 St. John, in his Revelation, uses the Expression  
 of Men's giving Glory to God, and repenting of  
 their evil Deeds, as Words having one and the  
 same Signification; Ch. ix. 20, xvi. 9. The rest  
 of the Men, which were not killed by these plagues,  
 yet REPENTED NOT of——their Murders, nor of  
 their Sorceries, nor of their Fornications, nor of  
 their Thefts; but——blasphemed the Name of God,  
 who hath power over these Plagues, and they RE-  
 PENTED NOT, to give him GLORY.

Glorifying of God therefore, and promoting  
 Righteousness and Truth among Men, being in ef-  
 fect one and the same thing; from hence appears  
 the Reason, and the Consistency of our Lord's com-  
 manding his Disciples in the Text, to let their  
 Light shine before Men; and yet exhorting them  
 in another Part of the very same Discourse, ch.  
 vi. 1. Take heed that ye DO NOT your Alms before  
 men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no Re-  
 ward of your Father which is in Heaven: And,  
 When thou dost thine alms, do not sound a Trumpet  
 before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues  
 and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of men:  
 Verily, I say unto you, they have their Reward.



The Reason (I say) and the Consistency of Both *SERMON.*  
 these Exhortations, appears from the peculiar *XVIII*  
 Considerations annexed to each Exhortation re-  
 spectively. The Same thing in different Circum-  
 stances, is not the Same thing. A Particular  
 good Action, done with a Particular View of Vain-  
 glory and popular Applause; ceases to be a religi-  
 ous Action, and falls short of its Reward. The  
 Same Action performed with such a View, and in  
 such a Manner, as to have a direct and proper  
 Tendency to promote and encourage the universal  
 Practice of Virtue in the World; is, in the most  
 immediate and real Sense of the Words, glorify-  
 ing of our Father which is in Heaven; 'Tis causing  
 Men (as much as in Us lies,) to make Acknow-  
 ledgment of God, and to order their Lives as be-  
 ing under a perpetual Sense of his Inspection  
 and Government.

Every Act of Any Virtue whatsoever, has a natural  
 Tendency to This End; and in general, by habi-  
 tual good Living, is the Glory of God, in This  
 Sense of the Phrase, most highly advanced. But  
 Some Virtues in particular, have a more conspicu-  
 ous Influence towards This End, than Others.  
 And since in That Passage which I now referred  
 to, of the same Sermon of our Lord upon the  
 Mount; 'tis agreed on all hands, that What, in  
 the best Copies of the Original, is, *Take heed*  
*that ye do not your* **RIGHTEOUSNESS** *before men,* Matt.vi.1.  
 means undoubtedly, and is accordingly rendered  
 in Our Translation, *Take heed that ye do not your*



SERM. ALMS before men : 'Tis very probable that here  
 XVIII. in my Text likewise, our Lord, under the general  
 Terms, *Light and Good Works*, might have a particular regard to Works of *Beneficence and Charity* : Commanding his Disciples to make *conspicuous* their Practice of the *same* Virtue, when their *so doing* might be an *Honour* to Religion ; which, in *other* Circumstances, he commands them to keep *private*, when its being *publick* would serve only the Purposes of Vain-glory.

And indeed there is no one Christian Virtue, to the Practice of which there are in Scripture given more *earnest Exhortations*, or more *large and repeated Promises*, than to This of *Charity*. *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters ; for thou shalt find it after many Days*, Eccles. xi. 1. *If thou deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and bring the Poor that are cast out, to thy House : If when thou seest the Naked, thou cover them ; and hide not thyself from thine own flesh : Then shall thy Light break forth—in obscurity, and thy Darknes be as the Noon-day*, Is. lviii. 7, — 10. In like Manner, in the New Testament, our Lord exhorts : *When thou makest a Feast, call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the Blind : And then thou shalt be blessed ; For they cannot recompence thee ; for thou shalt be recompenced at the Resurrection of the Just*, Luke xiv. 13, 14. And in his Description of the last Judgment, he expresses the Sentence of the Blessed thus ; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World :*

For

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat, &c. SERM.  
 Matt. xxv. 34. And in his Discourse to the Pha- XVIII.  
 risees, Luke xi. 41. Give Alms, says he, of such  
 things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean  
 unto you. His Meaning is; not that Charity, or  
 Any other Virtue, will compensate for vicious and  
 immoral Practices; but that These Virtues are  
 really acceptable before God, in whose sight the  
 Pharisaical ceremonious Purifications were of no  
 Esteem.

It must and ought here to be acknowledged,  
 to the Honour of the Present Generation, that  
 there appears to be at *This time* among us a  
 Number of Persons so charitably disposed, and  
 so ready to make a good Use of the Plenty  
 wherewith the Providence of God has blessed  
 them; that, were it possible they could be ab-  
 solutely certain, their Charity should always be  
 expended in such Ways, and applied to such Pur-  
 poses only, for which it was designed; so as nei-  
 ther to become in any Degree an Encouragement  
 to *Idleness*, nor a Support of any *Party*, nor an  
 Occasion of *Pride*, or of raising Persons *Above*  
 those Circumstances in which they might be im-  
 ployed most usefully to the Publick: It cannot  
 at all be doubted, but the Supply would imme-  
 diately be *more* than is requisite, to relieve the  
 truly Indigent, and to answer the Wants of All  
 who were really unable to provide for the Neces-  
 sities of Life by Honest Labour. But indeed,  
 hardly any thing is more difficult, in an idle and

S E R M. corrupt Age, than for those who have the strong-  
 XVIII. est *Inclinations* as well as the greatest *Abilities* of  
 ~~~~~ doing Acts of Beneficence, to find out in *what*  
*manner*, and upon *what Objects* in particular, they  
 may best bestow their charitable good Offices;  
 so as that the Use and Benefit of them may be  
 the *most* extensive, and the *least* liable to Misap-  
 plication or Abuse. Nor is it possible in This  
 Case, to lay down any certain and determi-  
 nate *Rules*. Every Person, as he must of neces-  
 sity be left to the Determination of his own Pru-  
 dence, at *what* particular *Times* and *Places*, and in  
*what proportions* he will choose to bestow his Cha-  
 rity; so must he also in judging about the *man-*  
*ner* of disposing it, and upon *what Objects*, and  
 with *what particular Views* he will principally di-  
 rect it; that it may more immediately answer  
 the *Intention* of the Giver, and may be *most* con-  
 ductive to the *particular Purposes* he is chiefly de-  
 sirsous to promote. According to the *different*  
*Stations* of Life Men have been employed in,  
 and the *different* Scenes of humane Affairs they  
 have seen in the World; they are apt naturally  
 in consequence to frame to themselves very dif-  
 ferent Notions, what *Kinds* of Charities will in  
 the Whole be *most* useful to the Publick, and  
 most likely to answer the general Intention with  
 Success. In *every* Method that *has* or *can* be  
 proposed, when considered under *different Views*  
*and Regards*, it cannot be otherwise, but that  
*Each one* will be found liable in *Some Respects* to  
 more

more Objections than others, and in some to SERM.  
fewer. *Whatever* Way be taken, and *whatever* XVIII.  
Care and Circumspection Men use, in the Dis-  
posal of their Charity; it will always be possible,  
that the End they propose to themselves shall  
not be fully answered; and in *no way* can there  
be any certain and absolute Security, that every  
sort of Miscarriage shall be prevented. That  
which of all other Methods seems, upon the  
Whole, to have the *Advantage* in *most respects*;  
as being most *extensive* in its *Influence*, and *lasting*  
in its *Effects*; subject to the *fewest Inconveniences*,  
and *those* from time to time the most easily re-  
*medied*; is the *Education of poor Children*. Which,  
when put in a right Method, and directed in a  
right and proper Manner; is in effect a Com-  
pendium of almost every sort and kind of  
Charity, of almost all the several and most dif-  
ferent Instances of Beneficence in One. 'Tis,  
at the same time, both Feeding the Hungry,  
and cloathing the Naked with a Garment. 'Tis  
instructing the Ignorant in the first Principles of  
Religion, and promoting a general Sense and  
Knowledge of God in the World. 'Tis sowing  
early the Seeds of Virtue and good Manners,  
and preventing the first Beginnings of those viti-  
ous Habits, which, when they have taken root  
by Custom and long Practice seldom Any Zeal  
for Reformation of Manners is ever after able to  
correct. 'Tis, when joined with putting them  
upon Works of *Labour* and *Industry*, as it ought



SERM. always to be; 'tis then (I say) a Remedy against  
 XVIII. all the ill Effects of Idleness and Poverty, and  
 (by a *Double Benefit*) making Those to become  
 useful Members of the Publick, who would  
 otherwise have been a Burden and a Weight up-  
 on it. In a Word, 'tis at once relieving the Ne-  
 cessities of the Present Generation, and (as far as  
 Humane Care and Foresight can extend,) pre-  
 venting the Wants of Those which are to come.  
 To *This sort* of Charity therefore, (whenever  
 there is *reasonable* Ground to hope it will be duly  
 applied to the Purposes now mentioned,) we are  
 exhorted by *All* those Arguments in *Conjunction*,  
 which *singly* incite us to be beneficent in Any  
 of the Particular Instances. To this we are in-  
 vited by all the Considerations of Publick Bene-  
 fit, and by all the Motives and Arguments of  
 Religion. To This we are encouraged by the  
 united Force of all those Promises *as once*, which  
 in Scripture are made, on many *different* Occa-  
 sions, to the *several* Methods of showing Mercy  
 and Charity.

It has upon some Occasions been observed,  
 and perhaps not always wholly without Reason;  
 that the Children of the *meanest* Parents, sustain-  
 ed, educated, and instructed merely upon the  
 Charity of others; have sometimes in conse-  
 quence of these Advantages, and upon account  
 of This very Instruction, been tempted to be-  
 come *conceited* and *vain*, and *Above* being im-  
 ployed in those *meaner Services*, which are of all  
 others

others the *most necessary*, and at the same time S E R M. the *most useful* to the Publick: And sometimes XVIII. that they have become liable to be led away into *Factions*, which, being frequently founded upon Pretences of Religion, do find very great Support from whatever is capable of being changed into the *Ceremonies* and *Formalities* of *Superstition*. In order to remedy, as far as possible, these Inconveniencies, and to turn Objects of Charity into useful Members of the Publick; to instruct them in the plainest Principles of Sobriety and Virtue; and to inure them to Labour and Industry, which is the Great Support of every Nation; it has been resolved that the poor Children to be supported by *your* Charity, shall for the future (and the Design is already begun actually to be put in Execution) be employed the greatest part of their Time in such *Kinds of Work*, as may qualify them for the *lower* and *most necessary Services* of Life. And to This End provision has been made, that they shall *not only* be *cloathed* and *taught* as formerly, but that they shall be furnished moreover with *Food* and *Lodging*; that, being constantly kept together in a Place of *Work* and Employment, the proposed Intention may be more effectually answered; and the Inconveniencies, which it has perhaps not unjustly been apprehended would follow upon their being raised *Above* their proper Station, we may reasonably *hope*, will in great measure be prevented.

SERM. *One evident and very obvious good Effect of*  
 XVIII. *This Method, is; that whereas, when Children*  
 have only been *Taught* in Schools, it too often happens that by returning constantly home to their Parents or Relations, the Principles of Religion and good Manners wherein they been instructed, have from time to time been *extinguish'd* by the Influence of *ill Examples*, and overpowered by the continual Sight of *vicious Practices*; they will Now, as far as possible, be kept out of that Danger of being led away by ill Example; and, in a good Degree, out of the Reach of Contagion, of the most profligate and dissolute Part of the World. For Vice is not *natural* to Mankind, but taught by ill Education and corrupt Examples, confirmed by Custom and Habit, and Then indeed very hard to be rooted out by the Strongest Arguments or by the Wisest Instructions. For, that which has long been *crooked*, will not easily be *made straight*; and that which is *wanting*, cannot be *numbered*, Eccl. i. 15. But if young Persons can *from the Beginning* be kept out of ill Company, and be taught only the *plain* Principles of Religion and Virtue, and be inured to *Industry* and moderate *Labour*; they will easily be formed to the *Habits* of Sobriety and Modesty, to a Sense of the Reasonableness of virtuous Living, and to a Hatred of those vicious and debauched Practices, which bring so great a Part of Mankind *visibly* to *Temporal*, and too certainly to *Eternal* Destruction.

And

And whereas poor Orphans particularly, who SERM.  
XVIII.  
are left wholly destitute of Friends and Relations, are apt to be exposed not only to the Disadvantages of Ignorance and want of Instruction, and to the Seducements of ill Company in the worst and lowest Part of a loose and degenerate World, but very frequently also to lie under the greatest Temporal Wants, and be subject to such a Variety of Hardships and Oppressions, as often render them almost incapable of Any useful Employment in the World; By the Method now proposed, *These Objects* in particular, as they will probably be more *Willing than Others* to submit to such a Manner of Education as may best fit them for the *meanest* and most necessary Services, so *These* ('tis likely) will be the *principal and most numerous* Sharers in your present Beneficence. Which is one not inconsiderable additional Recommendation of the Design of turning Charity into this particular Channel.

The Provision now made for accommodating the poor Children with Food and Lodging, who before were only Cloathed and Taught; must indeed of necessity cause a considerable Increase of the Annual Expence. But if there be good Reason to hope, (as there plainly is in the Nature of the Thing,) that the Accession of Usefulness to the Charity by this Method, will in proportion be greater than the Increase of the Expence; this is a very just Argument to prevail with well-disposed Persons, to enlarge their Contributions. Every



SERM. ry Man, according as he purposes in his Heart, so  
 XVIII. let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for  
 God loveth a cheerful Giver. — As it is written;  
 he hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the Poor,  
 his Righteousness remaineth for ever. Being enrich-  
 ed in every thing to all Bountifulness, which causeth  
 thro' Us Thanksgiving to God. For the Admini-  
 stration of This Service, not only supplieth the Wants  
 of the Saints, but is abundant also by many Thank-  
 givings unto God: Whilst by the Experiment of this  
 Ministration, they glorify God for your professed  
 Subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your  
 liberal Distribution unto Them, and unto all Men.

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